A Practical COMMENTARY.

UPON THE

Two first Chapters of the first Epistle General of St. *Peter.*

BY THE

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To the Pious Reader.

THou mayest Remember in publishing some of this Authors Discourses about two Yeares ago, A Promise was made, That if they happend to be well received, more of them should see the Light.

The general acceptance they have met with (especially from those for whom they were chiefly design'd) And the necessity the Book-seller found to make a second Edition (tho by the Printers ovresight very incorrect) are sufficient grounds to oblige me to the making good that Promise. And here it is in part perform'd, by offering to thee the following Meditations of this Primitively Devout Author upon the two first Chapters of the first Epistle General of St Peter. His Latin Discourses which he had to the Students when he was Principall of the College of Edenburgh, are now in the Press.

Matters of Controversie in Religion among Protestant Divines, this good Man, upon all occasions,

caſions, in his Life time, either abſolutely ſhunned, or endeavoured to ſoften, and where he could not Conciliat the Termes and Points themſelves in diſpute, yet he endeavoured to reconcile the Perſons Diſputing: For [out of his great Charity] he had much better thoughts of each of them, than they ordinarly have one of another. And even when he gives in theſe Papers, his own Opinion in ſome few of thoſe Points, he does it, with that Moderation, and diſcretion, that can give no offence to any of the Parties, Except to ſuch of them, who will needs be contentious: He was a ſingular Inſtance how far good Men may differ in Judgment about ſome Abſtruſe points in Religion; Yet without Diminution of Affection, either to Truth, or to one-Another.

If his way of Expreſſion, or Method of handling the Paſſages of Scripture here treated of, are not according to the Modern Critical exactneſs, or if his Stile is not after the Mode and dreſs of thoſe times, And hence perhaps may be leſs gratifying to ſome, ſuch are humbly deſired, that they would be pleaſed to enjoy thoſe other Writings they ſo deſervedly value, and whereof they have ſo great ſtore in this Age: Yet at the ſame time, its hoped from their good

Nature

Nature, that they will bear with ſuch, who do, and muſt own to their great Comfort, that they find a ſweetneſs in this Divine Authors thoughts, and way of writeing peculiar to him, which make thoſe Scriptures, thus treated by him, drop ſweeter to their ſouls than Honey, *and the* Honey-comb. *While they Enlighten their underſtandings, at the ſame time they purify, and rejoyce their hearts*; While they make wiſe the Simple, they convert their Soul. *This was his deſign in Preaching thoſe Diſcourſes above thirty Years ago. And this is the Deſign in Publiſhing them now. God grant that the ſucceſs in peruſing them may anſwer the good intention of both.* Paul may plant and *Apollos* may water, but God giveth the increaſe, *which that it may be in that abundance, which ſhall make both Planters, and Waterers rejoyce in that Great and laſt Harveſt, is, and ſhall be the fervent Prayer of the Publiſher.*

J. F.

I. Ep. St. *Peter* Chap. 1. verſe 1.

Peter *an Apoſtle of Jeſus Chriſt, to the ſtrangers ſcattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Aſia, and Bithynia.*

THe grace of God in the heart of man, is a tender Plant in a ſtrange unkindly ſoyle, and therefore cannot well proſper and grow, without much care, and pains, and that of a skilful hand, and that hath the art of cheriſhing it; for this end, hath God given the conſtant Miniſtry of the Word to his Church, not only for the firſt work of converſion; but alſo for confirming, and increaſing of his grace in the hearts of his Children.

And though the extraordinary Miniſters of the Goſpel, the Apoſtles, had principally the former for their charge, the converting of unbelievers, Jews and Gentiles, and ſo the planting of Churches; to be after kept, and watered by others, as the Apoſtle intimates, 1*Cor.*3.6. Yet did they not neglect the other work of ſtrengthening the begun grace of God in the new Converts of thoſe times, both by reviſiting

them, and exhorting them in person as they could, and by the supply of their writing to them when absent.

And the benefit of this extends (not by accident, but by the purpose, and good Providence of God) to the Church of God in all succeeding Ages.

This excellent *Epistle* (full of Evangelical Doctrine and Apostolical authority) is a brief, and yet very clear summary both of the consolations and Instructions needful for the incouragement and direction of a Christian in his Journey to Heaven, Elevating his thoughts, and desires to that happiness, and strengthning him against all opposition in the way, both that of Corruption within, and Tentations and Afflictions from without.

The head's of Doctrine contain'd in it are many, but the maine that are most insisted on are these Three, *Faith*, *Obedience* and *Patience*. To establish the believing, to direct them in doing, and comfort them in suffering; And because the first is the ground-work and support of the other two, this first *Chapt.* is much in that, perswading them of the truth of that Mistery they had received and did believe, *viz.* their Redemption and Salvation by Christ Jesus; that Inheritance of immortality bought by his blood for them, and the evidence and stability of their Right and title to it.

And then he uses this belief, this assurance of the glory to come, as the great perswasive to the other two, both to holy Obedience, and constant Patience, since nothing can be too much either to forgo, or undergo, either to do, or to suffer for the attainment of that blessed State.

And

And as from the consideration of that Object, and matter of the Hope of Believers, he encourages to Patience, and exhorteth to Holiness in this *Chapter* in general, so in the following *Chapters*, he expresses more particularly, both the universal, and special Duties of Christians, both in doing and suffering, often setting before them to whom he wrote, the matchless example of the Lord Jesus, and the greatness of their engagement to follow him.

In the two first *verses*, we have the *Inscription* and *Salutation*, the usual stile of Apostolick Epistles.

The *Inscription* hath the *Author* and the *Addresse*, from whom, and to whom. The *Author* of this *Epistle* is design'd by his *Name* Peter, and his *Calling* an Apostle.

We shall not insist upon his Name, that it was imposed by Christ, and what is its signification, this the Evangelists teach us. *S. Joh.* 1. 42. & *Mat.* 16 18. &c.

By that which is spoken of him in divers passages of the Gospel, he is very remarkable amongst the Apostles, both for his Graces, and his failings, Eminent in zeal and courage, and yet stumbling oft in his forwardness, and once grosly falling, and these by the Providence of God being recorded in Scripture, give a check to the excess of *Rome's* conceit concerning this Apostle; Their extolling and exalting him above the rest, is not for his cause, and much less to the honour of his Lord and Master Jesus Christ, for he is injured and dishonoured by it; but 'tis in favour of themselves, as *Alexander* distinguished his two friends, that the one was a friend of *Alexander*, the other a friend of the *King*, That preferment they give this Apostle, is not in good will to

Peter, but in the desire of *Primacy*. But whatsoever he was, they would be much in pain to prove *Rome's* right to it by succession. And if ever it had any such right, we may confidently say, it has forfeited it long ago by departing from St. *Peters* foot-steps, and from his faith, and retaining too much those things wherein he was faultie, namely,

His unwillingness to hear of, and consent to Christs sufferings, his *Master spare thy selfe*, or *far be it from thee*, in those they are like him, for thus they would disburden and exempt the Church from the cross, from the real cross of afflictions, instead of that, have nothing but painted, or carved, or guilded Crosses, these they are content to embrace, and Worship too, but cannot endure to hear of the other, instead of the Cross of Affliction, they make the *Crown* or *Mitre*, the badge of their Church, and will have it known by Prosperity, and outward Pomp, and so turn the Church Militant, into the Church Triumphant, not considering, that it is *Babilons* voice, not the Churches, *I sit as a Queen and shall see no sorrow*.

Again his saying on the Mount at Christs Transfiguration, when he knew not what he said *'tis good to be here*, So they have litle of the true glory of Christ, but the false glory of that Monarchy on their seven hills, *'tis good to be here*, say they.

Again in their undue striking with the Sword, not the Enemies, as he, but the faithful Friends, and Servants of Jesus Christ; but to proceed.

We see here S *Peters* Office, or Title *An Apostle*, not *Chief Bishop*. Some in their glossing have been so Impudent as to add that beside the Text. Though

Chap.

Chap. 5. 4. He gives that Title to Christ alone, and to himself only *fellow Elder*, and here not *Prince of the Apostles*, but *An Apostle*, restored and reestablished after his fall, by repentance, and by Christ himself after his own Death and Resurrection, *Joh.* 21. Thus we have in our Apostle, a singular instance of humane frailty on the one side, and of the sweetness of Divine grace on the other. Free, and rich grace it is indeed, that forgives and swallowes up multitudes of sins, of greatest sins, not only sins before Conversion as to S. *Paul*, but foul offences committed after Conversion, as to *David*, and to this Apostle, not only once raising them from the dead, but when they fall, stretching out the same hand, and raising them again, and restoring them to their Station, and comforting them in it by his *free Spirit*, as *David* prayes Not only to cleanse polluted clay, but to work it into Vessels of honour, yea of the most defiled shape, to make the most refined Vessels, not vessels of honour of the lowest sort, but for the highest and most honourable Services, vessels to bear his own precious Name to the Nations; making the most unworthy and the most unfit, fit by his grace, to be his Messengers.

Of Jesus Christ.) Both as the beginning, and end of his Apostleship, as Christ is called *Alpha* and *Omega*, *Rev.* 2. 11. Chosen and called by him, and called to this, to Preach him, and salvation wrought by him.

Apostle of Jesus Christ.) Sent by him, and the Message no other but his Name, to make that known, And what this Apostleship was *then*; after some extraordinary way, befitting these first times of the Gospel,

Gospel, That is *Now*, the Ministry of the word in Ordinary, and therefore an imployment of more difficulty and excellency then is usually conceiv'd by many, not only of those that look upon it, but even of those that are exercised in it, to be Ambassadours for the greatest of Kings, and upon no mean imployment, that great treaty of peace and reconcilement betwixt him and mankind. 2*Cor*.5.20.

This *Epistle* is directed to the *Elect* who are described here, By their Temporal, and by their Spiritual conditions. The first hath very much dignity, and comfort in it, but the other hath neither, but rather the contrary of both, and therefore the Apostles intent, being their comfort, he mentions but the one in passing, to signifie to whom particularly he sent his *Epistle*; But the other is that which he would have their thoughts dwell upon, and therefore prosecutes it in his following discourse, and if we look to the order of the words, their temporal condition is but interjected, for 'tis said, *to the Elect, first*, and then *To the Strangers scattered*, &c. And he would have this as it were drown'd in the other, *according to the foreknowledge of God the Father*.

That those dispersed Strangers that dwelt in the Countries here named, were *Jews*, appears, if we look to the foregoing *Epistle*, where the same word is used, and expresly appropriated to the *Jews*. S*Jam*. 1.1. And *Gal*. 2. S *Peter* is called *An Apostle of the Circumcision*, as exercising his Apostleship most towards them, and there is in some passages of the *Epistle*, somewhat that though belonging to all Christians, yet hath in the strain and way of expression a particular fitness to the believing *Jews*, as being particularly

ticularly verified in them, which was ſpoken of their Nation, *Chap.* 2. *v.* 9. 10.

Some argue from the Name *Strangers* that the *Gentiles* are here meant, which ſeems not to be; For Proſelyte *Gentiles* were indeed called ſtrangers in *Jeruſalem*, and by the *Jews*; But were not the *Jewes* Strangers in theſe Places, *Pontus*, *Galatia*, *Cappadocia*, *Aſia*, and *Bithynia*? Not ſtrangers dwelling together in a proſperous flouriſhing condition, as a well planted *Colonie*, but *Strangers of the diſpertion*, ſcattered too and fro, and their diſperſion which was partly, firſt by the *Aſſyrian* Captivity, and after that the *Babyloniſh*, and by the Invaſion of the *Romans*, and it might be in theſe very times increaſed by the believing *Jews* flying from the hatred, and perſecution that was raiſed againſt them at home.

Theſe places here mentioned through which they were diſperſed, are all in *Aſia*. So *Aſia* here is *Aſia* the leſſer. Where its to be obſerved, that ſome of theſe who heard S *Peter*, *Act.* 2. are ſaid to be of thoſe regions. And if any of thoſe then converted were amongſt theſe diſperſed, the Comfort was no doubt the more grateful from the hand of the ſame Apoſtle by whom they were firſt converted, but this is only conjecture. Tho Divine truths are to be received equally from every Miniſter alike, yet it muſt be acknowledged that there is ſomething (we know not what to call it) more acceptable reception of thoſe who at firſt were the means of bringing men to God then others, like the opinion ſome have of Phyſitians whom they love.

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The Apoſtle comforts theſe ſtrangers of this diſperſion by the ſpiritual union which they obtained by Effectual calling, and ſo calls off their eyes from their outward diſperſed and diſpiſed condition, to look above that, as high as the ſpring of their happineſs, the free love, and Election of God. Scattered in the Countries, and yet gathered in Gods Election, choſen or pickt out, Stangers to men amongſt whom they dwelt; but known, and foreknown to God, removed from their own Country to which men have naturally an unalterable affection but made heirs of a better, as followes *verſe* 3. 4. And having within them the evidence both of Eternal Election, and that expected ſalvation, the Spirit of holineſs, *verſe* 2. At the beſt a Chriſtian is bnt a Sranger here, ſet him where you will, as our Apoſtle teacheth after, and 'tis his priviledge, that he is ſo, and when he thinks not ſo, he forgets and diſparages himſelf, and deſcends far below his quallity when he is much taken with any thing in this place of his Exile.

But this is the wiſdom of a Chriſtian when he can ſolace himſelf againſt the meaneſs, and any kind of diſcomfort of his outward condition with the comfortable aſſurance of the love of God, that he hath called him to holineſs, given him ſome meaſure of it, and an endeavour after more, and by this may he conclude, that he hath ordained him unto ſalvation, if either he is a Stranger where he lives, or as a ſtranger deſerted of his friends, and very near ſtript of all outward comforts, yet may he rejoyce in this, that the Eternal unchangable Love of God that is from Everlaſting to Everlaſting is ſealed to his ſoul,

and

O what will it avail a man to be compassed about with the favour of the world, to sit unmolested in his own home and possessions, and to have them very great and pleasant, well moneyed, and landed, and befriended, and yet estranged and severd from God, not having any token of his special Love.

To the Elect,] The Apostle here denominates all the Christians to whom he writes by the condition of true Believers, calling them *Elect and sanctified*, &c. And the Apostle St. *Paul* writes in the same stile in his Epistles to the Churches, not that all in these Churches were such indeed, but because they professed to be such, and by that their profession, and Calling as Christians, they were obliged to be such, and as many of them as were in any measure true to that their Calling, and profession were really such. Besides it would seem not unworthy of Consideration, that in all probability there would be fewer false Christians, and the number of true believers usually greater, in the Churches in those Primitive times, then now in the best reformed Churches, because there could not then be many of them that were from their Infancy bred in the Christian Faith, but for the greatest part, were such, as being of years of discretion, were by the hearing of the Gospel, converted from *Paganisme* and *Judaisme* to the Christian Religion first, and made a deliberate choise of it, to which there were at that time no great outward Encouragements, and therefore the lesse danger of multitudes of hypocrites, which as Vermine in Summer, breed most in the time of the Churches Prosperity. Tho no Nation or Kingdom had then

universally received the faith, but rather hated and persecuted it, yet were there even then amongst them, as the writings of the Apostles testifie, false Brethren, and inordinate walkers, and men of corrupt minds, earthly minded, and led with a spirit of envy and contention, and vaing lory.

Howsoever the question that is moved concerning the necessary qualifications of all the members of a true visible Church, can no way (as I conceive) be decided from the Inscriptions of the Epistles, but certainly they are useful to teach Christians, and Christian Churches what they ought to be, and what their holy profession requires of them, and sharply to reprove the gross unlikeness, and inconformity that is in the most part of men, to the description of Christians. As there be some, that are too strait in their Judgement concerning the *being*, and nature of the visible Church; so certainly the greatest part of Churches are too loose in their practice.

From the dissimilitude betwixt our Churches, and those, we may make this use of reproof. That if an Apostolical *Epistle* were to be directed to us, it behoved to be inscribed to the Ignorant, prophane, malitious &c. As he, who at the hearing of the Gospel read, said, Either this is not the Gospel, or we are not Christians. So either these Characters, given in the Inscription of these *Epistles*, are not true Characters, or we are not true Christians.

Verse 2.

Verse 2.

Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through Sanctification of the Spirit, unto Obedience, and sprinckling of the blood of Jesus Christ.

IN this *verse* we have their *Condition*, and *Causes* of it, Their *Condition*, *Sanctified*, and *Justified*, the former expressed by *Obedience*, the latter, by *sprinkling of the blood of Christ*. The Causes, 1. *Eternal Election*. 2. *The Execution of that Decree*, Their *Effectual Calling*, which (I conceive) is meant by Election here, the selecting them out of the World, and joyning them to the fellowship of the Children of God, so *Joh.* 15. 19. The former, *Election*, particularly ascribed to God the Father, the latter to the Holy Spirit, And the blood of Jesus Christ the Son of God is here the cause of their Justification, and so the whole Trinity concurring, dignifie them with this their Spiritual and happy estate.

First, I shall discourse of these seperately, and then of their Connection. 1. Of the state it selfe, and first of *Justification*, tho named last.

This sprinkling has respect to the Rite of the Legal Purification by the sprinkling of Blood, and that appositely, for these Rites of sprinkling and Blood, did all point out this Blood, and this Sprinkling, and exhibited this true ransome of souls which was only shadowed by them.

As the use and end of Sprinkling was *Purification* and *Expiation*, because sin merited death, and that the pollutions and staines of human nature was by

ſin. Such is the pollution, that it can be no manner of way waſht off, but by Blood *Heb.* 9. 22. Neither is there any Blood able to purge from ſin, except the moſt precious Blood of Jeſus Chriſt, which is called the blood of God, *Act.* 20. 28.

That the ſtain of ſin can only be waſht off by Blood, intimates, that it merits Death, And that no Blood, but that of the Son of God, can do it, intimates, that this ſtain merits Eternal Death, and it had been our portion, except the death of the Eternal Lord of life had freed us from it.

Filthineſs needs ſprinkling, *Guiltineſs* (ſuch as deſerves death) needs ſprinkling of Blood, and the death it deſerves being Everlaſting death, The Blood muſt be the Blood of Chriſt. The Eternal Lord of life, dying to free us from the ſentence of death.

The Soul (as the body) hath its life, its health, its purity, and the contrary of theſe, its Death, Diſeaſes, Deformities, and Impurity, which belong to it as to their firſt Subject, and to the body by participation.

The Soul and Body of all mankind is ſtained by the Pollution of ſin; The impure Leproſie of the Soul, is not a ſpot outwardly; but wholly inward, hence as the corporal Leproſie was purified by the ſprinkling of blood, ſo is this. Then by reflecting, we ſee how all this that the Apoſtle St. *Peter* expreſſeth, is neceſſary to Juſtification. 1. Chriſt the Mediator betwixt God and man, is God and man. 2. A Mediator not only interceeding, but alſo ſatisfying, *Eph.* 2. 16. 3. This ſatisfaction doth not reconcile us unleſs it be applyed, Therefore there

is not only mention of blood, but the *ſprinkling* of it, the ſpirit by faith ſprinkleth the ſoul as with hyſop, wherewith the ſprinkling was made, this is it of which the Prophet ſpeaks, *Iſai.* 52. 15. *So ſhall he ſprinkle many Nations.* And which the Apoſtle to the *Hebrewes* prefers above all Legal ſprinklings *Chap.* 9. 12, 13, 14. both as to its duration, and as to the exellency of its effects.

Men are not eaſily convinced and perſwaded of the deep ſtain of ſin, and that no other Laver can fetch it out, but the ſprinkling of the Blood of Jeſus Chriſt. Some that have moral Reſolutions of amendment, diſlike at leaſt groſs ſins, and purpoſe to avoid them, and 'tis to them cleanneſs enough to reform in thoſe things; but they conſider not, what becomes of the guiltineſs they have contracted already, and how that ſhall be purged, how their natural pollution ſhall be taken away; be not deceived in this, 'tis not an evaniſhing ſigh, or a light word, or a wiſh of, *God forgive me*, no, nor the higheſt current of Repentance, nor that which is the trueſt evidence of Repentance, Amendment. 'Tis none of theſe that purifies in the ſight of God and expiats wrath, they are all imperfect and ſtained themſelves, cannot ſtand and anſwer for themſelves, much leſs be of value to counterpoiſe their former guilt of ſin, the very tears of the pureſt Repentance, unleſs they be ſprinkled with this Blood, are impure, all our waſhings without this, are but waſhings of the Blackmore, it is labour in vain, *Jer.* 2. 22. *Job.* 9. 30, 31. There is none truly purged by the Blood of Chriſt, that do not endeavour purity of heart and Converſation; but yet it is the Blood of Chriſt by

which

which they are all fair, and there is no ſpot in them, here 'tis ſaid, *Elect to obedience*, but becauſe that obedience is not perfect, there muſt be ſprinkling of the Blood too. There is nothing in Religion further out of natures reach, and out of its likeing and believing, then the doctrine of Redemption by a Saviour, and a Crucified Saviour, by Chriſt, and by his blood, firſt ſhed on the Croſs in his ſuffering, and then ſprinkled on the ſoul by his Spirit. 'Tis eaſier to make men ſenſible of the neceſſity of Repentance, and amendment of life (though that is very difficult) then of this purging by the ſprinkling of this precious Blood. Did we ſee how needful Chriſt is to us, we would eſteem and love him more.

'Tis not by the hearing of Chriſt, and of his blood in the Doctrine of the Goſpel, 'tis not by the ſprinkling of water, even that water that is the ſign of this blood, without the blood it ſelf, and the ſprinkling of it. Many are preſent where it is ſprinkled, and yet have no portion in it. Look to this, that this blood be ſprinkled on your ſouls, that the deſtroying Angel may paſs by you. There is a Generation (not ſome few, but a generation) deceived in this, they are their own Deceivers, pure in their own eyes, *Prov.* 30. 12. How earneſtly doth *David* pray *waſh me, Purge me with hyſop.* Though bathed in tears, *Pſa.* 6. 6. that ſatisfied not *waſh thou me.* This is the honourable condition of the Saints. That they are purified and conſecrated unto God by this ſprinkling, yea have on *long white Robes waſht in the Blood of the Lamb*, There is mention indeed of *great Tribulation*, but there is a double comfort Joyned with it. 1. They come out

of

of it, that tribulation hath an end. And 2 They paſs from that to glory; for they have on the Robe of *Canditates, long white Robes waſht in the blood of the Lamb,* waſht white in blood, as for this blood, 'tis nothing but purity and ſpotleſneſs being ſtained with no ſin, and beſides, hath that vertue to take away the ſtain of ſin where, 'tis ſprinkled, *My Wellbeloved is white and ruddy* ſaith the Spouſe, thus in his death, ruddy by bloodſhed, white by Innocence, and purity of that blood.

Shall they then that are purged by this blood return to live among the Swine, and tumble with them in the pudle, what groſs injury is this to themſelves, and to that Blood by which they were cleanſed. They that are choſen to this ſprinkling, are likewiſe choſen to Obedience, this blood purifieth the heart, yea, This blood *purgeth our Conſciences from dead works to ſerve the living God. Heb.* 9. 14.

Unto Obedience] 'Tis eaſily underſtood to whom, when obedience to God is expreſſed by the ſimple abſolute name of Obedience, it teacheth us, that to him alone belongs Abſolute and Unlimited Obedience, all obedience by all creatures, And 'tis the ſhame and miſery of man that he hath deported from this Obedience, that we are become *Sons of diſobedience,* But Grace renewing the hearts of believers, changeth their natures, and ſo their names, and makes them *Children of obedience.* As afterwards in this *chapter.* This Obedience conſiſts as in the receiving Chriſt, as our Redeemer, ſo alſo at the ſame time, as our Lord, or King, an intire rendring up of the whole man to his obedience. This Obedience then

of

of the only begotten Jesus Christ may well be understood not as *his Actively*; as *Beza*, but *Objectivly*, as 2 *Cor.* 10. 5. I think here 'tis contain'd, yea chiefly understood, To signifie, that *Obedience* which the Apostle to the *Romans* calls the *Obedience of faith*, by which the Doctrine of Christ is received, and so Christ himself, which uniteth the believing soul to Christ, he sprinkles it with his blood to the remission of sin, and is the root and spring of all future obedience in the Christian life.

By *Obedience*, Sanctification is here intimated, it signifies then, both habitual, and active odedience, Renovation of heart, and conformity to the Divine will; the mind is illuminated by the Holy Ghost to know and believe the divine will, yea this Faith is the great and chief part of Obedience *Rom.* 1. 8. the truth of the Doctrine is first impressed on the mind, hence flowes out pleasant obedience, and full of love, hence all the affections, and the whol body with its members learn to give a willing obedience and submit unto God, whereas before they resisted him being under the standerd of Satan.

This Obedience tho imperfect, yet hath a certain (if I may so say) imperfect perfection, Its universal three manner of wayes. 1. in the subject. 2. In the Object. 3. In the duration, the whole man subjected to the whole Law, and that constantly, and perseveringly.

The first universality, is the cause of the other, because its not in the tongue alone, or in the hand, &c. but has its root in the heart, therefore doth not wither as the grasse, or flower lying on the superfice of the earth: but it flourishes because rooted, and therefore

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it embraces the whole Law, becauſe it ariſes from a reverence it has for the Lawgiver himſelf. Reverence I ſay, but tempered with Love; hence it accounts no Law nor command little, or of ſmall value which is from God, becauſe he is great and highly eſteemed by the pious heart. No command hard, (tho contrary to the fleſh) becauſe all things are eaſie to Love, there is the ſame authority in all, as St. *James* divinely argues. And this Authority is the golden chain of all the commandments, which if broke in any link all falls apieces.

That this three fold perfection of obedience is not a picture drawn by fancy, is evident in *David*, *Pſal.* 119. where he ſubjects himſelf to the whole Law: His feet, *v.* 105. his mouth, *v.* 13. his heart *v.* 11. the whole tenor of his life *v.* 24. He ſubjects himſelf to the whole law, *v.* 6. and he profeſſes his conſtancy therein, in *v.* 16. and 33. *teach me the way of thy Statutes and I ſhall keep it unto the end.*

According to the foreknowledge of God the Father,] The exacteſt knowledge of things is to know them in their cauſes; it is then an excellent thing, and worthy of their endeavours that are moſt deſirous of knowledge, to know the beſt things in their higheſt Cauſes, and the happieſt way of this knowledge is, to poſſeſs thoſe things, and to know them in Experience, to ſuch the Apoſtle here ſpeaks, and ſets before them the excellency of their ſpiritual condition, and leads them to the cauſes of it.

Their Eſtate is, that they are *ſanctified*, and *juſtified*, the neareſt cauſe of both theſe is *Jeſus Chriſt*, he is made unto them both *Righteouſneſs and Sanctification*

fication, the ſprinkling of his blood purifies them from guiltines, and quickens them to obedience.

Now followes to conſider the appropriateing, or applying Cauſe the *Holy*, and *holy making*, or *ſanctifying Spirit*, the Author of their ſelecting from the world, and effectual calling unto grace.

The ſource of all, the appointing, or decreeing Cauſe, is *God the Father*, for though they all work Equally in all, yet in order of working, we are taught thus to diſtinguiſh, and particularly, to aſcribe the firſt work of Eternal Election to the firſt Perſon of the bleſſed Trinity.

In, or *through Sanctification*,] for to render it Elect *to the ſanctification* is ſtrained: ſo then I conceive this Election, is their Effectual Calling, which is by the working of the holy Spirit. 1 *Cor.* 26. 27. 28. where *Vocation* and *Election* are uſed in the ſame ſenſe. *To ſee your Calling Brethren, how that not many wiſe after the fleſh, &c. but God hath choſen the fooliſh things of the world to condemn the wiſe* 'tis the firſt act of the decree of Election, the beginning of its performance in theſe that are Elected, and 'tis in it ſelf a real ſeperating of men from the profane and miſerable Condition of the world, and an appropriating and conſecrating of a man unto God, and therefore both in regard of its relation to Election, and in regard of its own nature, it well bears that name. *Rom.* 8. 28. 30. *Act.* 2. 47. & 13. 48. *Joh.* 15. 19.

Sanctification in a narrower ſenſe, as diſtinguiſhed from *Juſtification*, ſignifieth the inherent holineſs of a Chriſtian, or his Inclinement, and Innablement to obedience mentioned in this *verſe*: but 'tis here more large and ſo extends with the whole work of

Renovation

Renovation. and is the ſevering and ſeperating of men to God, by his holy Spirit, drawing them unto him, and ſo it comprehends Juſtification (as here) and the firſt working of faith by which the ſoul is juſtified, through its apprehending, and applying the righteouſneſs of Jeſus Chriſt.

Of the ſpirit,] The Word calls men externally, and by that Eternal calling prevails with many to an External receiving and profeſſing of Religion, but if it be left alone it goes no further, it is indeed the means of ſanctification and effectual calling, Joh. 17. 17. *Sanctifie them through thy truth.* But this it doth when the ſpirit that ſpeaks in the Word works in the heart, and cauſes it to hear and obey. The Spirit or Soul of a man is the chief and firſt ſubject of this work, and 'tis but ſlight falſe work that begins not there, but the Spirit here, is rather to be taken for the Spirit of God the Efficient, then the Spirit of man the Subject of this ſanctification. And therefore our Saviour in that place prayes to the Father, *that he would ſanctifie his own by that truth,* and this he doth by the concurrence of his Spirit, with that word of truth which is the life and vigour of it, and makes it prove *the power of God unto ſalvation to them that believe,* 'tis a fit means in it ſelf, but 'tis then a prevailing meanes when the Spirit of God brings it in to the heart, 'tis a Sword, and *ſharper then a two edged Sword,* fit to divide, yea *even to the dividing of Soul and ſpirit.* But this it doth not without it be in the Spirits hand, and he applyes it to this cutting and dividing. The word calls, but the Spirit Drawes, not ſever'd from that word, but working in it, and by it.

'Tis a very difficult work to draw a Soul out of the hands and ſtrong chains of Satan, and out of the pleaſing Entanglements of the world, and out of its own natural perverſneſs to yield up it ſelf unto God, to deny it ſelf, and live to him, and in ſo doing to run againſt the main ſtream, and the current of the ungodly world without, and Corruption within.

The ſtrongeſt Rhetorick the moſt moving and perſuaſive way of diſcourſe is all too weak, the tongue of Men and Angels cannot prevail with the ſoul to free it ſelf and ſhake off all that detains it, although it be convinced of the truth of thoſe things that are repreſented to it, yet ſtill it can and will hold out againſt it, and ſay, *non persuadebis etiamsi persuaseris.*

The hand of Man is too weak to pluck any ſoul out of the croud of the world, and ſet it in amongſt the ſelect number of Believers. Only the Father of Spirits hath abſolute command of Spirits, *viz.* the Souls of Men, to work on them as he pleaſeth, and where he will. This powerful, this ſanctifying Spirit knowes no Reſiſtance, works ſweetly, and yet ſtrongly; it can come in to the heart, whereas all other ſpeakers are forc'd to ſtand without. That ſtill voice within perſwades more then all the lowd crying without, as he that is within the houſe, though he ſpeak low, is better heard and underſtood, then he that ſhouts without doors.

When the Lord himſelf ſpeaks by this his ſpirit to a Man ſelecting and calling him out of the loſt world, he can no more diſobey then *Abraham* did when the Lord ſpoke to him after an extraordinary manner to depart from his own Country and Kindred, *Gen.* 12. 4. Abraham *departed as the Lord had ſpoken to*

him. There is a ſecret but very powerful vertue in a word, or look, or touch of this ſpirit upon the ſoul, by which 'tis forced, not with a harſh but a pleaſing violence and cannot chuſe but follow it, not unlike that of *Elijah's* Mantle upon *Eliſha.* 1 *Kin.* 19. 19. How eaſily did the Diſciples forſake their callings, and dwellings to follow Chriſt.

The ſpirit of God drawes a Man out of the world by a ſanctified Light ſent into his mind diſcovering to him. 1 How baſe and falſe the ſweetneſs of ſin is that withholds men and amuſes them, that they return not, and how true and ſad the bitterneſs is, that will follow upon it. 2. Setting before his eyes the free and happy condition, *the glorious liberty of the Sons of God,* the riches of their preſent enjoyment, and their far larger and aſſured hopes for afterwards. 3. Making the beauty of Jeſus Chriſt viſible to the ſoul which ſtraight way takes it ſo, that it cannot be ſtayed from coming to him: though its moſt beloved friends, moſt beloved ſins lye in the way and hang about it and cry will you leave us ſo? It will tread upon all to come within the embracements of Jeſus Chriſt, and ſay with St. *Paul, I was not diſobedient to,* or *unperſwaded by the heavenly Viſion.*

'Tis no wonder that the Godly are by ſome called ſingular and preciſe, they are ſo, *Singular,* a few ſelected ones pickt out by Gods own hand for himſelf, *Pſal.* 4. 3. *Know that the Lord hath ſet apart him that is godly for himſelf, Therefore* ſaith our Saviour *the world hates you becauſe I have choſen you out of the world.* For the world lyes in unholineſs and wickedneſs, is buried in it. And as living men

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can have no pleasure amongst the dead, neither can these Elected ones amongst the ungodly; they walk in the World as warily as a Man or Woman neatly apparel'd would doe amongst a multitude that are all sullied and bemired.

Endeavour to have this sanctifying spirit in your selves, pray much for it, for his promise is past to us, that *he will give this holy Spirit to them that ask it*, and shall we be such fools as to want it, for want of asking, when we find heavy fetters on our souls and much weakness, yea aversness to follow the voice of God calling us to his obedience, then pray with the Spouse, *Draw me*, She cannot go nor stirre without that drawing, and yet with it, not only goes but runs. *we will run after thee.*

Think it not enough you hear the word and use the outward Ordinances of God and profess his Name, for many are thus called, and yet but a few of them are chosen. There is but a small part of the world outwardly called in comparison of the rest that is not so, and yet the number of true Elect is so small that it gains the number of these that are called, the name of many. They that are in the visible Church, and partake of external vocation are but like a large list of names (as in civil elections is usual) out of which a small number is chosen to the dignity of true Christians, and invested into their priviledge; some men in nomination to Offices or employments, think it a worse disapointment and disgrace to have been in the list, and yet not chosen, then if their names had not been mention'd at all, certainly 'tis a greater unhappines

unhappines to have been *not far from the Kingdom of God* (as our Saviour ſpeaks) and miſs of it, then ſtill to have remained in the furtheſt diſtance, to have been at the mouth of the Haven (the fair Havens indeed) and yet driven back and Shipwrackt, your labour is moſt prepoſterous, you ſeek to aſcertain and make ſure things that cannot be made ſure, and that which is both more worth and may be made ſurer then them all, you will not endeavour to make ſure, Hearken to the Apoſtles advice, and at length ſet to this in earneſt, to *make your calling and Election ſure*, make ſure this Election as 'tis here (for that's the Order) your effectual calling ſure, and that will bring with it aſſurance of the other, the eternal Election and love of God towards you which follows to be conſidered.

According to the foreknowledge of God the Father.] *Known unto God are all his works from the beginning* ſaith the Apoſtle *James Act* 15. 18. He ſees all things from the beginning of time to the end of it and beyond to all Eternity, and from all Eternity he did foreſee them, but this foreknowledge here, is peculiar to the Elect, *Verba ſenſus in ſacra ſcriptura connotant affectus*, as the Rabbins remark, ſo in man *Pſal.* 66. *if I ſee Iniquity*, and in God, *Pſal.* 1. *alt. Amos* 3. 2. and in that ſpeech of our Saviour, relating it as the terrible doom of Reprobates at the laſt day *Depart*, &c. *I know you not, I never knew you*, ſo St. *Paul*, *Rom.* 7. 15. and *Beza* obſerves that γινωσκειν is by the Greeks ſometimes taken for *decernere*, *judicare*, thus ſome ſpeak, to *cognoſce* upon a buſineſs, ſo then this foreknowledge is no other, but that Eternal love of God, or

decree

decree of Election by which ſome are appointed unto life, and being foreknown or elected to that end, they are predeſtinate to the way to it, *Rom.* 8. 29.

'Tis moſt vain to Imagine a foreſight of faith in men and in the view of that, as the Condition of Election it ſelf, to have choſen them; for 1. Nothing at all is *futurum*, or can have that imagined *futurition*, ſo to ſpeak, but as it is, and becauſe 'tis decreed by God to be; and therefore as before the Apoſtle St. *James* ſayes *known to God are all his own works*, therefore becauſe *his* works in time, and *his* purpoſe from Eternity. 2. 'Tis moſt abſurd to give any reaſon of Divine will without himſelfe. 3. This eaſily ſolves all that difficulty that the Apoſtle ſpeaks of, and yet he never thought of ſuch a ſolution but runs high for an anſwer, not to ſatisfie cavilling reaſon, but to ſilence it, and ſtop its mouth. For thus the Apoſtle Argues, *Rom.* 9. 19, 20. *Thou wi't ſay then unto me, why doth he yet find fault for who hath reſiſted his will? Nay, but O man who art thou that replyeſt againſt God?* Who can conceive whence this ſhould be, that any man ſhould believe unleſs it be given him of God, and if given him, then it was his purpoſe to give it him, and if ſo, then is it evident that he had a purpoſe to ſave him, and for that end he gives faith, not therefore purpoſes to Save, becauſe Man ſhall believe. 4. This ſeems croſs to theſe Scriptures where they ſpeak of the ſubordination, or rather Coordination of thoſe two, as here, *Foreknown*, and *Elect*, not becauſe of Obedience, or ſprinkling, or any ſuch thing, but *to Obedience, and ſprinkling*; which is by faith. So he predeſti-

predeſtinated, not becauſe he foreſaw Men would be conform to Chriſt, but that they might be ſo, as *Rom.* 8. 29. *For whom he did foreknow, he alſo did predeſtinate.* and the ſame order, *Act.* 2. 47. *And the Lord added to the Church dayly ſuch as ſhould be ſaved.* and 13. 48. *And as many as were ordained to Eternal life believed.*

This Foreknowledge then, is his Eternal and Unchangable Love, and that thus he Chuſeth ſome, and rejecteth others, is for that great End, to manifeſt and magnifie his Mercy and Juſtice; but why he appointed this Man for the one, and the other for the other; made *Peter* a veſſel of this mercy, and *Judas* of wrath; this is even ſo becauſe it ſeemed good to him. This if it be harſh, yet is Apoſtolick Doctrine, *Hath not the Potter* (ſaith St *Paul*) *power over the ſame Lump to make one Veſſel unto honour, and another unto diſhonour.* This deep we muſt admire, and alwayes in conſidering it, cloſe with this. *O the depth of the riches, both of the wiſdom and knowledge of God.*

Now the Connexion of theſe, we are, for our profit to take notice of, that effectual Calling is inſeparably tyed to this Eternal *Foreknowledge*, or *Election* on the one ſide, and Salvation on the other. Theſe two links of the chain are up in Heaven in Gods own hand, but this middle one, is let down to earth, into the hearts of his Children, and they laying hold on it, hath ſure hold on the other two, for no power can ſever them, and therefore the reading the characters of Gods Image in their own ſouls, thoſe are the counterpain of the golden characters of his Love, in which their names are written

in the Book of Life. Their believing writes their names under the promiſes of the revealed Book of Life, the Scriptures, and ſo aſcertains them that the ſame names are in the ſecret Book of Life that God hath by himſelf from Eternity. So finding the ſtream of grace in their hearts, tho they ſee not the Fountain whence it flowes, nor the Ocean into which it returns, yet they know that it hath its ſource, and ſhall return to that Ocean which ariſeth from their Eternal Election, and Salvation, and ſhall empty it ſelfe into Eternity of happineſs.

Hence much joy ariſeth to the Believer, this tye indiſſolvable, as the Agents are the Father, the Son, and the Spirit. So *Election*, and *Vocation*, and *Sanctification*, and *Juſtification*, and *Glory*, and therefore in all conditions they may from the ſence of the working of the Spirit in them, look back to that Election, and forward to that Salvation; but they that remain unholy and diſſobedient have as yet no evidence of this Love, and therefore cannot without vain preſumptions and ſelf deluſion, Judge thus of themſelves, that they are within the peculiar Love of God: but in this, *Let the Righteous be glad, and let them ſhout for joy all that are upright in heart.*

'Tis one main point of happineſs, that he that is happy doth know, and judge himſelfe to be ſo: this being the peculiar good of a reaſonable creature, 'tis to be enjoyed in a Reaſonable way, 'tis not as the dull reſting of a Stone, or any other natural body in its natural place; but the knowledge and conſideration

ſideration of it, is the fruition of it, the very reliſhing, and taſting its ſweetneſs.

The perfect bleſſedneſs of the Saints is abiding them above: but even their preſent condition is truly happy, tho incompleatly, and but a ſmall beginning of that which they expect, and this their preſent happineſs, is ſo much the more, the more clear knowledge, and firm perſwaſion they have of it, 'tis one of the pleaſant fruits of the Godly *to know the things that are freely given them of God.* 1 *Cor.* 2. 12. Therefore the Apoſtle to comfort his diſperſed Brethren ſets before them a deſcription of that excellent Spiritual Condition to which they are called.

If they be inſeparably linkt together, then by any one of them a man may lay hold upon all the reſt, and may know that his hold is ſure, and this is that way wherein we may attain, and ought to ſeek that comfortable aſſurance of the Love of God. Therefore *Make your Calling ſure*, and by that your *Election*: for that being done, this follows of it ſelf. We are not to pry immediately into the Decree, but to read it in the performance, though the Mariner ſees not the *Pole-ſtar*, yet the Needle of the Compaſs that points to it, tells him which way he ſails, thus the heart that is touched with the Loadſtone of Divine Love, trembling with godly fear, and yet ſtill looking towards God by fixed believing, it points at the Love of Election and tells the ſoul that its courſs is heavenward towards the Haven of Eternal reſt. He that Loves may be ſure he was loved firſt, and he that chuſes God for his delight and Portion, may conclude confidently, that God

hath choſen him, to be one of thoſe that ſhall enjoy him, and be happy in him for ever, for that our Love and Electing of him, is but the return and repercuſſion of the beams of his Love ſhining upon us.

Find thou but within thee Sanctification by the Spirit, and this argues neceſſarily, both Juſtification by the Son, and the Election of God the Father 1 *Joh.* 4. 13. *Hereby know we that we dwell in him, and he in us, because he has given us of his Spirit.* Tis a moſt ſtrange demonſtration, *ab Effectu reciproco*, He Called, thoſe he hath Elected, he Elected thoſe he Called, where this ſanctifying Spirit is not, there can be no perſwaſion of this Eternal Love of God, they that are *Children of diſobedience*, can conclude no otherwiſe of themſelves but that they are the *Children of wrath.* Although from preſent unſanctification, a Man cannot inferre that he is not *Elected*, for the Decree may for part of a Mans life run (as it were) under-ground; Yet this is ſure, that that eſtate leads to death, and unleſs it be broken, will prove the black line of reprobation. A man hath no Portion amongſt the Children of God, nor can read one word of Comfort in all the Promiſes that belongs to them, while he remains unholy. Men may pleaſe themſelves in prophane Scoffing at the Holy Spirit of Grace, but let them withal know this, that that Holy Spirit they mock, and deſpiſe is that Spirit, *that ſeals men to the day of Redemption. Eph.* 4. 30.

If any pretend they have the Spirit, and ſo turn away from the ſtraight rule of the Holy Scriptures, they have the Spirit indeed; but 'tis a fanatical Spirit,

rit, the Spirit of Deluſion, and Giddineſs; but the Spitit of God that leads his Children in the way of truth, and is for that purpoſe ſent them from Heaven to guide them thither, ſquares their thoughtts, and wayes to that Rule. And that Word whereof it is Author, which was inſpired by it, ſanctifies them to Obedience. *He that ſaith, I know him, and keepeth not his Commandments, is a Lyar and the truth is not in him.* 1 *Joh.* 2. 4.

Now this Spirit that ſanctifieth, and ſanctifieth to Obedience, is within us the Evidence of our Election, and Earneſt of our ſalvation, and whoſo are not ſanctified, and led by this Spirit, the Apoſtle tells us, what is their Condition, *Rom.* 8. 9. *if any man have not the Spirit of Chriſt, he is none of his.*

Let us not delude our ſelves, this is a truth, if there be any in Religion, they that are not made Saints in the eſtate of Grace, ſhall never be Saints in Glory.

The Stones that are appointed for that Glorious Temple above, are hewen and poliſhed and prepar'd for it here, as the ſtones were wrought and prepared in the Mountains for building the Temple at *Jeruſalem.*

This is the Order *Pſal.* 84. 12. He gives *Grace*, and *Glory*, as Moraliſts can tell us, that the way to the Temple of Honour, is through the Temple of Vertue. They that think they are bound for Heaven in the wayes of ſin, have either found a new way untroden by all that are gone thither, or will find themſelves deceived in the end. We need not then that poor ſhift for the preſſing of Holineſs

Holineſs, and Obedience upon Men, to repreſent it to them, as the meriting cauſe of Salvation, this is not at all to the purpoſe, ſeeing without it, the Neceſſity of Holineſs to Salvation is preſſing enough, for holineſs is no leſs neceſſary to Salvation, then if it were the meriting Cauſe of it, it is as inſeparably tyed to it as the purpoſe of God, and in the Order of performance, Godlineſs is as certainly before Salvation, as if Salvation did wholly, and all together depend upon it, and were in point of Juſtice deſerved by it. Seeing then there is no other way to Happineſs, but by Holineſs, no Aſſurance of the Love of God without it. Take the Apoſtles advice ſtudy it, ſeek it, follow earneſtly after holineſs *without which no man ſhall ſee the Lord.*

Grace unto you and peace be multiplyed.] It hath always been a civil cuſtom amongſt Men, to ſeaſon their intercourſe with good wiſhes one for another, this the Apoſtles uſe in their Epiſtles, in a ſpiritual divine way, ſuitable to their holy Writings. It well becomes the Meſſengers of *Grace* and *Peace* to wiſh both, and to make their ſalutation conform to the main ſcope, and ſubject of their diſcourſe. The Hebrew word of ſalutation we have here *Peace*, and that which is the ſpring both of this, and theſe good things, are all in the other word of Salutation uſed by the Greeks, *Grace*. All right Rejoycing, and Proſperity, and Happineſs flowes from this ſource, and from this alone, and is fought elſewhere in vain.

In general, this is the Character of a Chriſtian ſpirit, to have a heart fill'd with *Bleſſing*, with this ſweet good will, and good wiſhing to all, eſpecially to thoſe that are their Brethren in the ſame Profeſſion of

of Religion. And this Charity is a precious Balm diffusing it self in the wise, and seasonable expressions of it, upon fit occasions, and those expressions must be cordial, and sincere, not like that you call *Court Holy-water*, in which there is nothing else but falshood, or vanity at the best. This manifests Men to be the Sons of Blessing, and of the ever blessed God, the Father of all Blessing, when in his name they bless one another, yea our Saviours Rule goes higher, to *bless those that curse them*, and urges it by that Relation to God as their Father, that in this they may resemble him. *That ye may be the Children of your Father which is in Heaven.*

But in a more eminent way, its the duty of Pastors to bless their People, not only by their publick and Solemn Benediction, but by daily and instant Prayers for them in secret. And the great Father who seeth in Secret will reward them openly.

They are to be ever, both endeavouring and wishing their increase of knowledge, and all Spiritual grace, in which they have St. *Paul* a frequent Pattern.

They that are Messengers of this *Grace*, if they have Experience of it, 'tis the Oyl of gladness that will dilate their heart, and make it large in Love and spiritual desires for others, Especially their own Flocks.

Let us 1 Consider the matter of the Apostles desire for them, *Grace and peace*. 2. The measure of it, that it may *be multiplyed*.

1 *Grace*] We need not make a noise with the many School-distinctions of *Grace*, and describe in what sense 'tis here to be taken, for no doubt 'tis all *saving Grace* to those dispersed Brethren; so

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that in the largeſt Notion that it can have that way, we may ſafely here take it.

What is *preventing Grace*, *aſſiſting Grace*, *Working* and *Co-working Grace*, (as we may admit theſe differences in a ſound ſenſe) but divers Names of the ſame effectual ſaving Grace in relation to our different Eſtate, as the ſame Sea receives different names from the different parts of the ſhoar it beats upon.

Firſt, It Prevents and Workes, then it Aſſiſts and Proſecutes what it hath wrought, *he worketh in us to will and to do*: but the whole ſenſe of ſaving Grace, I conceive, is comprehended in theſe two 1 Grace in the Fountain, that is the peculiar Love and Favour of God. 2. In the Streams, the Fruits of this Love, (for 'tis not an empty, but a moſt rich, and liberal Love) *viz.* All the Graces and ſpiritual Bleſſings, of God beſtowed upon them whom he hath freely choſen; The Love of God in it ſelfe can neither Diminiſh nor Increaſe, but it is Multiplied, or abounds in the Manifeſtation and Effects of it, ſo then, to deſire Grace to be multiplied to them, is to Wiſh to them the living Spring of it, that Love that cannot be exhauſted: but is ever flowing forth, and in ſtead of abateing, makes each day richer then another.

And this is that which ſhould be the top and ſumme of Chriſtian Deſires. To have, or want any other thing indifferently; but to be reſolved and reſolute in this, to ſeek a ſhare in this Grace, the free Love of God, and the ſure Evidences of it within you, the fruit of holineſs and the Graces of his Spirit, but the moſt of us are otherwiſe taken up. We will not be convinc'd how baſely and fooliſhly we are buſied, though

though in the best and most respected employments of the World. So long as we neglect our noblest trade of growing Rich in Grace, and the comfortable enjoyment of the Love of God. Our Saviour tells us of *one thing needful*, Importing that all other things are comparatively Unnecessary, By-works, and meer Impertinences, and yet in these we lavish out our short & uncertain time, we let the other stand by, till we find leasure. Men who are altogether prophane, think not on it at all, some others possibly deceive themselves thus, and say, When I have done with such a business in which I am engaged, then I will sit down seriously to this, and bestow more Time and pains on these things that are undeniably Greater, and Better, and more worthy of it; but this is a slight that is in danger to undo us; what if we attain not to the end of that business, but end our selves before it, or if we do not, yet some other business may step in after that. Oh then, say we, that must be dispatch'd also, thus by such delayes, we may loose the present opportunity, and in the end our own souls.

Oh be perswaded it deserves your dilligence, and that without delay to seek somewhat that may be constant enough to abide with you, and strong enough to uphold you in all Conditions, and that is alone this free Grace, and Love of God. While many say, *who will shew us any good*, set you in with *David* in his choise, *Lord lift thou up the light of thy Countenance upon me, and this shall rejoyce my heart more then the abundance of Corn and Wine.*

This is that Light that can break into the darkest dungeons, from which all other Lights and Comforts

are ſhut out, and without this, all other enjoyments are, what the world would be, without the Sun, nothing but darkneſs. Happy they who have this light of Divine favour, and Grace ſhining into their ſouls, for by it they ſhall be led to that City where the Sun and Moon are needleſs, for *the glory of God doth lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof.* Rev. 21. 23.

Godlineſs is profitable for all things, ſaith the Apoſtle, *having the Promiſes of this life, and that which is to come*, all other bleſſings are the attendants of Grace and follow upon it. This bleſſing that the Apoſtle here (and ſo St. *Paul* in his *Epiſtles*) joynes with Grace, was with the Jewes of ſo large a ſenſe, as to Comprehend all that they could deſire, when they wiſh'd Peace, they meant all kind of good, all welfare and proſperity. And thus we may take it here, for all kind of Peace, yea, and for all other bleſſings, but eſpecially that ſpiritual Peace, which is the proper fruit of Grace, and doth ſo intrinſecally flow from it.

We may and ought to wiſh to the Church of God outward bleſſings, and particularly outward Peace, as one of the greateſt, ſo one of the moſt valluable favours of God, thus prayed the Pſalmiſt, *Pſal.* 122. 7. *Peace be within thy walls, and Proſperity within thy Palaces.*

But that wiſdom that doth what he will, by what means he will, and works one contrary out of another, brings Light out of Darkneſs, Good out of Evil, Can, and doth turn Tears, and Troubles to the advantage of his Church, but certainly in it ſelf, Peace is more ſuitable to its increaſe, and if not abus'd

abus'd proves so too. As in the Apostolick Times, its said, *The Church had Peace, and increased exceedingly. Act.* 9. 31. We ought also to wish for Ecclesiastical Peace to the Church, that she may be free from Dissensions and Divisions.

These readily arise more, or less (as we see in all times) and haunt Religion, and the Reformation of it, as a *malus genius*. S. *Paul* had this to say to his *Corinthians*, though he had given them this testimony that they were enriched in all Utterance, and Knowledge and were wanting in no guife. *Cap.* 1. *v.* 5. Yet presently after *v.* 13 *I hear that there are Divisions and Contentions among you. The Enemy had done this*, as our Saviour speaks, and this Enemy is no fool: for by divine permission, he works to his own end very wisely; for there is not one thing that doth on all hands choak the seed of Religion so much, as Thorny debates and differences about it selfe. So in succeeding Ages, and at the breaking forth of the Light in *Germany* in *Luther's* time, Multitudes of Sects arose.

Profane men do not only stumble, but fall and break their necks upon these Divisions. We see (think they, and some of them possibly say it out) that they who mind Religion most, cannot agree upon't. Our easiest way is, not to Embroyl our selves, nor at all to be troubled with the business. Many are of *Gallio's* temper, they *will care for none of those things*. Thus these Offences prove a mischief to the prophane World, as our Saviour sayes, *wo to the world because of Offences.*

Then the erring side, that is taken with new opinions and fancies, are altogether taken up with

them, their main thoughts spent upon them, and thus the sap is drawn from that which should nourish, and prosper in their hearts *sanctified useful knowledge*, and *saving grace*. The other are as weeds that divert the nourishment in Gardens from the Plants and Flowers: and certainly these weeds, *viz.* Mens own conceits, cannot but grow more with them, when they give way to them, then solid Religion doth: for their hearts (as he said of the earth) are Mother to those, and but Step-mother to this.

It is also a Loss even to those that oppose Errors and Divisions, that they are forced to be busied that way; for the wisest and Godliest of them find it (and such are sensible of it) that disputes in Religion, are no friends to that which is far sweeter in it; but hinders and abates it *viz.* these pious and devout thoughts, that are both the more useful, and truly delightful.

As Peace is a choice blessing, so this is the choisest Peace, and is the peculiar inseparable Effect of this Grace, with which it is here joyntly wish'd, *Grace* and *Peace*. The flower of Peace growing upon the Root of Grace. This spiritual Peace hath two things in it. 1. Reconciliation with God, 2. Tranquillity of Spirit. The quarrel and matter of enmity, you know, betwixt God and Man is the Rebellion, the sin of Man; and he being naturally altogether sinful, there can proceed nothing from him but what foments and increases the Hostility. 'Tis Grace alone, the most free Grace of God, that contrives, and Offers, and makes the Peace, else it had never been. We had universally perish'd without it. Now in this is the wonder of Divine Grace, that the Al-

mighty

mighty God ſeeks agreement, and entreats for it, with ſinful clay which he could wholly deſtroy in a moment.

Jeſus Chriſt the Mediator and Purchaſer of this Peace, bought it with his Blood, kill'd the enmity by his own Death, *Eph.* 2. 15. And therefore the Tenor of it in the Goſpel runs ſtill in his name, *Rom.* 5. 1. *we have Peace with God, through Jeſus Chriſt our Lord.* and St. *Paul* expreſſes it in his Salutations, that are the ſame with this. *Grace and Peace from God the Father and our Lord Jeſus Chriſt.*

As the free Love, and Grace of God appointed this means, and way of our Peace, and Offered it, So the ſame Grace applies it, and makes it Ours, and gives us faith to apprehend it.

And from our ſenſe of this Peace, or Reconcilement with God, ariſes that which is our inward Peace, a calm and quiet temper of Mind. This Peace that we have with God in Chriſt, Is Inviolable, but becauſe the ſenſe, and perſwaſion of it may be interrupted, the ſoul that is truly at Peace with God, may for a time be diſquieted in it ſelf, through weakneſs of Faith, or the ſtrength of Temptation, or the Darkneſs of deſertion, loſing ſight of that Grace, that Love and Light of Gods Countenance on which its Tranquillity, and Joy depends. *Thou hid'ſt thy face,* ſaith *David, and I was troubled,* but when theſe Eclipſes are over, the Soul is revived with new Conſolation, as the face of the Earth is renewed, and made to ſmile with the return of the Sun in the Spring, and this ought alwayes to uphold Chriſtians in the ſaddeſt times, *viz.* that the Grace, and Love of God towards them, depends not

not on their ſenſe, nor upon any thing in them, but is ſtill in it ſelfe incapable of the ſmalleſt alteration.

'Tis Natural to Men to deſire their own Peace, the Quietneſs and Contentment of their Minds: but moſt Men miſs the way to it, and therefore find it not, for there is no way to't indeed, but this One, wherein few ſeek it, *viz.* Reconcilement and Peace with God. The perſwaſion of that alone makes the Mind clear and ſerene, like your faireſt Summer Dayes. *My peace I give you*, ſaith Chriſt, *not as the world. Let not your hearts be troubled.* All the Peace and Favour of the World cannot calm a troubled heart, but where this Peace is that Chriſt gives, all the trouble and diſquiet of the world cannot diſturb it, *When he giveth quietneſs, who then can make trouble? and when he hideth his face, who then can behold him? whether it be done againſt a Nation, or againſt a man only.* See alſo for this *Pſal.* 46. 123. All outward diſtreſs to a mind thus at Peace, is but as the ratling of the Hail upon the Tiles, to him that ſits within the Houſe at a ſumptuous Feaſt. A good Conſcience is called ſo, and with an advantage that no other Feaſt can have, nor could men endure it. A few hours of feaſting will weary the moſt profeſt Epicure, but a Conſcience thus at Peace, is a continual Feaſt, with continual unwearied delight. What makes the World take up ſuch a prejudice againſt Religion, as a ſour unpleaſant thing? they ſee the Afflictions and griefs of Chriſtians; but they do not ſee their Joyes, the inward pleaſure of mind that they can poſſeſs in a very hard Eſtate. Have you not tryed other wayes enough? hath not

He

He tried them that had more ablility and skill for't then you, and found them not only *vanity* but *vexation of Spirit*. If you have any belief of holy Truth, put but this once upon the tryal, seek Peace in the way of Grace. This inward Peace is too precious a Liquor to be poured into a filthy Vessel; a holy Heart, that gladly entertains grace, shall find that it, and Peace cannot dwell asunder.

An ungodly Man may sleep to Death in the Lethargy of Carnal Presumption and Impenitency; but a true lively, solid Peace he cannot have. *There is no Peace to the wicked, saith my God, Isa* 57. 21. And if He say there is none; speak Peace who will, if all the World with one voice would speak it, it shall prove none.

2*ly*. Consider the *Measure* of the Apostles desire for his Scattered Brethren, that this *Grace* and *Peace* may be *Multiplyed*. This the Apostle wishes for them knowing the Imperfection of the Graces, and Peace of the Saints while they are here below, and this they themselves in sense of that Imperfection daily do desire. They that have tasted the sweetness of this Grace and Peace call uncessantly for more. This is a disease in Earthly Desires, and a disease incurable, by all these things desired; there is no satisfaction attainable by them, but this Avarice of Spiritual things is a Vertue, and by our Saviour is called *Blessedness*: because it tends to Fullness and Satisfaction. *Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after Righteousness for they shall be filled.* Mat. 5. 6.

Verse 3, 4.

Verſe 3, 4.

Bleſſed be the God, and Father of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, who according to his abundant Mercy, hath begotten us again unto a lively hope, by the Reſurrection of Jeſus Chriſt from the dead.

To an Inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away.

'Tis a cold lifeleſs thing to ſpeak of ſpiritual things upon meer Report; but they that ſpeak of them, as their own, as having ſhare, and intereſt in them, and ſome experience of their ſweetneſs, their diſcourſe of them is enlivened with firm belief, and ardent affection; They cannot mention them, but their hearts are ſtraight taken with ſuch gladneſs, as they are forc'd to vent in praiſes. Thus our Apoſtle here, and St. *Paul*, *Eph.* 1. and often elſewhere, when they conſider'd theſe things, wherewith they were about to comfort the Godly, to whom they wrote, They were ſuddenly Elevated with the Joy of them, and broke forth into Thanksgiving. So teaching us by their Example, what real Joy there is in the Conſolations of the Goſpel, and what praiſe is due from all the Saints to the God of thoſe Conſolations. This is ſuch an Inheritance, as the very thoughts, and hopes of it are able to ſweeten the greateſt Griefs, and Afflictions. What then ſhall the Poſſeſſion of it be? wherein there ſhall be no Rupture, nor the leaſt drop of any

any grief at all. The main Subject of these verses is, that which is the main Comfort that supports the Spirits of the Godly in all Conditions.

I. Their after Inheritance in the 4 *verse*. 2. Their present Title to it, and assured hope of it, *v.* 3. 3dly. The immediate cause of both assigned *viz. Jesus Christ.* 4ly. All this derived from the free Mercy of God, as the first and highest Cause, and return'd to his Praise and Glory as the last and highest End of it.

For the *First*. The *Inheritance*. [But because the 4th. *verse* which describes it, is link't with the subsequent, we will not go so far off to return back again, but first speak to this 3 *verse*, and in it,]

Consider 1. Their Title to this Inheritance, *Begotten again.* 2. Their assurance of it, *viz. A holy or lively Hope.* The Title that the Saints have to their rich Inheritance is of the validest, and most unquestionable kind, *viz.* by Birth. Not by their first natural birth. By it we are all born to an Inheritance indeed; but we find what it is, *Eph.* 2. 3. *Children of Wrath*, Heirs apparent of Eternal flames. 'Tis an Everlasting Inheritance too, but so much the more fearful, being of Everlasting Misery, or (so to speak) of Immortal Death, and we are made sure to it, they who remain in that Condition cannot lose their Right although they gladly would escape it, they shall be forc'd to enter Possession. But 'tis by a new and supernatural Birth, that men are both freed from their Engagement to that woful Inheritance, and invested into the Rights of this other here mentioned, as full of happiness as the former is miserable. Therefore are they said here to be begotten

again to that lively Hope. God the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ hath begotten us again. And thus are the Regenerate the Children of an Immortal Father, and so entituled to an Inheritance of immortality, *if Children then Heirs, heirs of God.* This Sonship is by Adoption in Christ, therefore added, *joynt-heirs with Christ, Rom.* 8. 17. we Adopted, and He the only begotten Son of God by an Eternal Ineffable generation.

And yet this our Adoption is not a meer extrinsecal denomination, as is adoption amongst Men: but accompanied with a real Change in those that are adopted, a new Nature, and Spirit infus'd into them, by reason of which, as they are Adopted to this their Inheritance in Christ, they are likewise begotten of God, and born again to it, by the Supernatural work of Regeneration. They are like their heavenly Father, they have his Image renewed on their Souls, and their Fathers Spirit. They have and are acted, and led by it. This is that great Mistery of the Kingdome of God, that puzled *Nicodemus*, it was darkness to him at first, till he was instructed in that Night, under the covert whereof he came to Christ.

Nature cannot conceive of any Generation or birth, but that which is within its own compass, only they that are partakers of this Spiritual Birth, understand what it means; to others it is a Riddle, an unsavory unpleasant subject.

'Tis sometime ascribed to the subordinate means, to Baptism, called therefore the *Laver of Regeneration. Tit.* 3. 5. To the Word of God. *Jam.* 1. 18. Its that Immortal Seed, whereby we are born

again

again; by the Ministers of this Word, and the seals of it, as 1 *Cor.* 4. 15. *For though you have ten thousand Instructers in Christ, yet have ye not many Fathers; For in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the Gospel.* As also *Gal.* 4. 19. But all those have their vigour and efficacy in this great work, from the Father of Spirits, who is their Father in their first Creation, and Infusion, and in this their Regeneration, which is a new and second Creation. 2 *Cor.* 5. 17. *If any man be in Christ he is a new Creature.*

Divines have reason to inferre from the Nature of Conversion thus expresst, that Man doth not bring any thing to this work himselfe, 'tis true he hath a will, as his natural Faculty, but that this Will Embraces the offer of Grace, and turns to him that offers it, is from Renewing Grace, that sweetly, and yet strongly; strongly, and yet sweetly, inclines it.

1. Nature cannot raise it selfe to this, more then a man can give natural being to himselfe. 2. 'Tis not a superficial change, 'tis a new life and being. A moral man in his changes and Reformations of himselfe, is still the same man, though he Reform so far, as Men in their ordinary phrase, call him, *quite another Man*, yet in truth, till he be born again there is no new nature in him. *The Slugard turns on his bed as the door on the hinges*, sayes *Solomon*. Thus the Natural man turns from one custome and posture to another, but never turns off. But the Christian by vertue of this *new birth* can say indeed, *ego non sum ego*. I am not the same man I was.

You that are Nobles, aspire to this honourable

Condition, add this Nobleneſs to the other, for it far ſurpaſſes it, make it the Crown of all your honours and advantages. And you that are of mean birth, or if you have any Crack or ſtain in your birth, the only way to make up, and repair all, and truly to Enoble you, is this, to be the Sons of a King, yea of the King of Kings, and *this Honour have all his Saints. To as many as received him, he gave this priviledge to be the Sons of God.* Joh. 1. 12.

Unto a lively Hope,] *Now we are the Sons of God,* (ſaith the Apoſtle 1 *Joh.* 3. 2.) *But it doth not yet appear what we ſhall be.* Theſe Sons, are Heirs; but all this lifetime is their underage; yet even then being partakers of this New Birth, and Sonſhip, they have Right to it, and in the aſſurance of that Right, this *Living Hope*; As an Heir when he is Capable of thoſe thoughts, hath not only Right of Inheritance; but may rejoyce in the hope he hath of it, and pleaſe himſelf in thinking on't; but hope is ſaid to be only of an uncertain good; true, in the world's phraſe 'tis ſo; for their Hope is converſant in uncertain things, or in things that may be certain, after an uncertain manner, all their woldly Hopes are tottering, built upon ſand, and their Hopes of Heaven are but blind, and groundleſs Conjectures: but the Hope of the Sons of the Living God, is a living Hope. That which *Alexander* ſaid when he dealt liberally about him, that *he left hope to himſelf*, the Children of God may more wiſely and happily ſay, when they leave the hot purſuit of the world to others, and deſpiſe it, their Portion is Hope, the thread of *Alexander's* life was cut off in the midſt

of

of his Victories, and so all his Hopes evanished; but their hope cannot dye, nor disapoint them.

But then its said to be *Lively*, not only *Objectively*, But *Effectively*, Enlivening, and Comforting the Children of God in all Distresses, Enabling them to encounter and surmount all difficulties in the way. And then it is formally so, it cannot fail, dyes not before accomplishment. Worldly Hopes often mock Men, and so cause them to be ashamed, and Men take it as a great blot, and are most of all ashamed of those things that discover weakness of judgment in them, now worldly Hopes doe thus, they put the fool upon a Man, when he hath judged himself sure, and laid so much weight and expectation on them, then they break, and foyl him, they are not Living, but Lying Hopes, and dying Hopes; they die often before us, and we live to bury them, and see our own own Folly, and Infelicity in trusting to them: but at the utmost they dye with us when we dye, and can accompany us no further. But this Hope answers Expectation to the full, and much beyond it, and deceives no way, but that happy one of far exceeding it.

A living Hope, living in Death it selfe. The World dare say no more for its devise, but *dum spiro spero*, but the Children of God can add, by vertue of this living Hope, *dum exspiro spero*. 'Tis a fearful thing when a Man and all his hopes dye together. Thus saith *Solomon* of the Wicked, when He dyeth (many of them before, but at the utmost then all of them) *then dye his Hopes. Prov.* 11. 7. but *the Righteous hath hope in his Death Prov.* 14. 32.

Death

Death that cutts the Inews of all other Hopes, and turns men out of all other Inheritances, it alone fulfils this Hope, and ends it in Fruition. As a Messenger sent to bring the Children of God home to the possession of their Inheritance.

By the Resurrection of Christ from the Dead,] This refers to both *Begotten again* by his Resurrection, and having this *living Hope* by his Resurrection; and well suits both, it being the proper cause of both, in this order. First then of the Birth, then of the Hope.

The Image of God is renewed in us by our Union with him who is *the express Image of his Fathers person*, Gal. 4. 19. Therefore this new birth in the Conception is exprest by the *forming of Christ in the soul*, and Resurrection particularly is assign'd as the cause of our New Life, this New Birth is called our Resurrection, and that in conformity to Christ, yea by vertue and Influence of His. His Resurrection is called a *Birth*, he the first begotten from the dead, *Rev.* 1. 5. and that Prophetic *Psal.* 2. 7. *Thou art my Son this day have I begotten thee*, is applyed to his Resurrection as fulfilled in that. *Act.* 13. 33. *God hath fulfilled the same unto us their Children, in that he hath raised up Jesus again, as it is also written in the second Psalm. Thou art my Son this day have I begotten thee.* Not only is it the Exemplary, but the Efficient cause of our new birth, Thus *Rom.* 6. at large, and often elsewhere, and thus likewise it is the cause of our *Living hope*, that which indeed inspires and maintains life in it, because he hath Conquered Death, and is risen again, and that implyed, which followeth, is *set down at the right hand of God*, hath entered

entered Poſſeſſion of that Inheritance. This gives us a Living Hope, that according to his own Requeſt, *where he is there we ſhall be alſo.* Thus this Hope is ſtrongly underſet, on the one ſide by the Reſurrection of Chriſt, on the other by the abundant mercy of God the Father. Our hope depends not on our own Strength, or Wiſdom, nor on any thing in us, for then if it did, it would be ſhort-liv'd, would die, and dye quickly: but on his Reſurrection that can dye no more, for *in that he died, he died unto ſin once: but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God.* Rom. 6. 10. This makes this Hope not to imply in the notion of it Uncertainty, as worldly hopes; but 'tis a firm, ſtable, inviolable hope, *an Anchor pitch'd within the vail.*

According to his abundant mercy,] Mercy is the Spring of all this; yea great Mercy, and manifold Mercy: for (as St. *Bernard* ſaith) Great ſin, and Great Miſeries, need Great Mercy, and many ſins and Miſeries, need many Mercies, and is not this great Mercy, to make of Satans ſlaves, Sons of the moſt high. Well may the Apoſtle ſay, *Behold what manner of Love, and how great Love the Father hath ſhewed us, that we ſhould be called the Sons of God,* The World knowes us not, becauſe it knew not him, they that have not ſeen the Father of a Child, cannot know its Reſembling him, for the World knowes not God, and therefore diſcerns not his Image in his Children to eſteem them for it. But whatever be their Opinion, this we muſt ſay our ſelves, Behold what *Love* to take fire-brands of Hell, and to appoint them to be one day brighter then the Sun in the firmament, *To raiſe the poor out of*

the

the dunghil, and set them with Princes Psal. 11. 38.

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,] Lastly, we see it stirs up the Apostle to praise the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, This is the stile of the Gospel, as formerly under the Law, the God of *Abraham*, *Isaac*, and *Jacob*, and the God that brought thee up out of the Land of *Egypt*, &c. This now is the Order of the Government of Grace, that it holds first with Christ our Head, and in Him with us, so he sayes, *I go to my Father, and your Father, and my God, and your God.* Which as St. *Cyril* of *Hierosol.* in his Catechism observes, shows us not only our Communion with him, that might have been exprest thus, I go to my God and Father, but the Order of the Covenant, First my Father, and my God, and then yours. Thus ought we in Consideration of the mercies of God, still take in Christ, for in him they are conveyed to us, Thus *Eph.* 1. 3. *with all spiritual Blessings in Christ Jesus.*

Blessed] He blesseth us really, *benefaciendo benedicit*, We bless Him by acknowledging His goodness. And this we ought to do at all times, *Psal.* 34. 1. *I will bless the Lord at all times, his praise shall continually be in my mouth.* All this is far below Him, and His mercies. What are our lame praises in comparison of his Love? Nothing, and less then nothing; but Love will stammer rather then be dumb. They that are amongst his Children begotten again, they have in the Resurrection of Christ, a lively hope of glory, as 'tis *Col.* 1. 27. *which is Christ in you the hope of Glory.* This leads them to observe and admire that rich mercy whence it flowes, and this consideration

ſideration awakes them, and ſtrains them to break forth into praiſes.

To an Inheritance incorruptible] *As he that taketh away a garment in cold weather, and as Vinegar upon nitre, ſo is he that ſingeth Songs to a heavy heart*, Prov. 25. 20.

Worldly Mirth is ſo far from curing Spiritual Grief, that even worldly Grief, where 'tis great, and takes deep root, is not allayed but increaſed by it, a man that is full of inward heavineſs, the more he is compaſſed about with mirth, it exaſperates and enrages his Grief the more, like ineffectual weak Phyſick, that removes not the humour but ſtirs it, and makes it more unquiet, but ſpiritual Joy is ſeaſonable for all Eſtates. In proſperity 'tis pertinent to crown, and ſanctifie all other Enjoyments, with this that ſo far ſurpaſſes them; and in diſtreſs 'tis the only *Nepenthes*, the cordial of fainting Spirits. So *Pſal.* 4. *He hath put joy into my heart*, this mirth makes way for it ſelfe which other mirth cannot do, theſe Songs are ſweeteſt in the Night of diſtreſs. Therefore the Apoſtle writing to his ſcattered afflicted Brethren, begins his Epiſtle with this Song of Praiſe, *Bleſſed be the God and Father*, &c.

The matter of it is, the Joyful Remembrance of the Happineſs laid up for them under the name of *Inheritance*. Now this Inheritance is deſcribed by the ſingular Qualities of it. They Contain. 1. The Excellency of its Nature. 2. The certainty of its attainment, the former in theſe three, *Incorruptible*, *Undefiled*, and *that fadeth not away*. The latter in the laſt words of this *verſe*, and in the following, *Reſerved in heaven for you*, &c.

God is bountiful to all, gives to all men, all that they have, Health, Riches, Honour, Strength, Beauty, and Wit, but those things he scatters (as it were) with an Indifferent hand. Upon others he lookes, as well as on his beloved Children: but the *Inheritance* is peculiarly theirs, Inheritance is convertible with Sonship, for *Gen.* 25. 5. *Abraham* gave gifts to *Keturah's* Sons and dismiss'd them; but the Inheritance was for the Son of the Promise. When we see Men rising in Preferment, Estate, or admir'd for Excellent Gifts, and Endowments of mind, we think there's a happy man: but we consider not that none of all those things are matter of Inheritance, within a while, he is to be turn'd out of all, and if he have not somewhat beyond all those to look to, he is but a Miserable man, and so much the more Miserable, that once he seem'd, and was reputed happy. There is a certain time wherein heirs come to possess, thus it is with this inheritance too, there is by the Apostle mention made of *a perfect man, unto the measure of the Stature of the fulness of Christ, Ephes.* 4. 13. And though the Inheritance is Rich and honourable, yet the heir being young is held under discipline, and is more strictly dealt with possibly then the Servants, sharply corrected for that which is let pass in them, yet still even then, in regard, of that which he is born to, his Condition is much better then theirs, and all the Correction he suffers, prejudices him not, but fits him for inheriting. The Love of our heavenly Father is beyond the Love of Mothers in tenderness, and yet beyond the Love of Fathers (which are usually said to Love more wisely) in point of wisdom. He will not

not undo his Children, his Heirs, with too much Indulgence? 'tis one of his heavy Judgments upon the foolish children of disobedience, that *ease shall slay them, and their Prosperity shall prove their destruction.*

While the Children of God are childish and weak in faith, they are like some great Heirs, before they come to years of understanding, they consider not their Inheritance, and what they are to come to, have not their Spirits Elevated to thoughts worthy of their Estate, and their behaviour Conformed to't, but as they grow up in years they come by litle and litle to be sensible of those things, and the nearer they come to possession, the more apprehensive they are of their Quality, and what doth answerably become them to do, and this is the duty of such as are indeed Heirs of Glory, to grow in the understanding, and consideration of that, which is prepared for them, and to suite themselves, as they are able, to those great Hopes. This is that the Apostle St. *Paul* prayes for, for his *Ephesians, Chap. 1. v. 18. The eyes of your understanding being enlightened, that ye may know what is the hope of his Calling, and what the riches of the Glory of his Inheritance in the Saints.* this would make them holy and heavenly, to *have their Conversation in Heaven from whence they look for a Saviour,* that we may then the better know somewhat of the Dignity and Riches of this Inheritance, Let us Consider the description that is here given us of it, And first,

Incorruptible, Although this seems to be much one with the 3d. *that fadeth not away,* which is a borrowed Expression for the illustrating of its Uncorruptibleness, yet I conceive there is some diffe-

rence, and that in these three qualities there is a Gradation. Thus its called, *Incorruptible*, that is, it perisheth not, cannot come to nothing, is an Estate that cannot be spent; but though it were abiding, yet it might be such, as the Continuance of it were not very desirable, this Life at the best, were but a misery to continue alwayes in it. *Plotinus* thanked God that his Soul was not tyed to an Immortal body. Then *Undefiled*, 'tis not stained with the least spot, this signifies the purity and perfection of it, that the perpetuity of it, it doth not only abide, and is pure, but those together, it abideth alwayes in its Integrity. And lastly it *Fadeth not away*, it doth not fade nor wither at all, is not sometimes more, sometimes less pleasant, but ever the same, still like it selfe, and that's the Immutability of it.

As it is *Incorruptible*, It carries it away from all Earthly Possessions and Inheritances; for so all those Epithits are intended to signifie in oppositon to the things of this World, and shewing how far it excels them all; and thus comparatively we are to Consider it: for as Divines say, of the knowledge of God, that we have here: the Negative Notion makes up a great part of it, we know rather what he is not, than what He is, Infinite, Incomprehensible, Immutable *&c.* so 'tis of this Happiness, this Inheritance, and indeed 'tis no other but God. We cannot tell you, what it is, but we can say so far, what it is not, as declares 'tis unspeakably above all the most excellent things of the inferiour World, and this present life, 'tis by privatives, by removing Imperfections from it, that we describe it, and can go no further. *viz. Incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away.*

All

All things that we ſee, being Compounded, may be diſſolved again, the very viſible Heavens that are the pureſt piece of the material World. (notwithſtanding the pains the Philoſopher takes to exempt them) the Scriptures teach us, that they are *Corruptible* Pſal. 102. 26. *They ſhall periſh but thou ſhalt endure; yea, all of them ſhall wax old like a Garment: as a veſture ſhalt thou change th m, and they ſhall be changed.* And from thence the Apoſtle to the *Hebrewes*, Chap. 1. v. 10. And our Apoſtle in his other *Epiſtle cap.* 3. 11. uſe the ſame expreſſion. But 'tis needleſs to fetch too great a Compaſs, to evince the Corruptibleneſs of all Inheritances. Beſides what they are in themſelves, 'tis a ſhorter way to prove them Corruptible in Relation to us, and our Poſſeſſing them by our own Corruptibleneſs, and Corruption, or periſhing out of this life in which we enjoy them, we are here *inter peritura perituri*, the things are paſſing we enjoy, and we are paſſing who enjoy them. Earthly Inheritance is ſo called in regard of Succeſſion: but to every one 'tis but at the moſt for term of life. as one of the Kings of *Spain* anſwered to one of his Courtiers, who thinking to pleaſe his Maſter wiſhed that Kings were Immortal. If that had been ſaid he, I ſhould never have been King. When Death comes, that removes a Man out of all his Poſſeſſions to give place to another; therefore are theſe Inheritances Decaying, and and dying in Relation to us: becauſe we decay, and dye, and when a Man dyes his Inheritances, and Honours, and all things here, are at an end in reſpect of him: Yea, we may ſay the World ends to him.

Thus *Solomon* reaſons, that a Mans happineſs cannot

not be upon this Earth: becauſe it muſt be ſome durable abiding thing that muſt make him happy, abiding, to wit in his Enjoyment. Now though the Earth abide, yet becauſe Man abides not on the Earth to poſſeſs it: but one Age drives out another, one Generation paſſeth and another cometh. *velut unda impellitur undâ*, therefore his Reſt and his Happineſs cannot be here.

All poſſeſſions here are defiled, and ſtained with many other defects and failings, ſtill ſomewhat wanting, ſome damp on them, or crack in them, fair houſes, but ſad cares flying about the Guilded and Cieled Rooſs, Stately and ſoft Beds, a full Table: but a ſickly body and queaſy ſtomack. The faireſt face ſome Mole, or Wart in it. All Poſſeſſions ſtained with ſin, either in acquiring or in uſing them, therefore called *Mammon of Unrighteouſneſs*. Sr. *Luk.* 16. 9. Iniquity ſo involved in the notion of Riches, that it can very hardly be ſeparated from them. St. *Hierom.* ſayes, *verum mihi videtur illud, dives aut iniquus eſt, aut iniqui Hæres.* Foul hands pollute all they touch, 'tis our ſin that defiles what we poſſeſs, 'tis Sin that burdens the whole Creation, and preſſes Groans out of the very frame of the World, *Rom.* 8. 22. *For we know that the whole Creation groaneth and travelleth in pain together until now.* This our Leproſie defiles our Houſes, the very walls, and floors, our meat and drink and all we touch, polluted alone, and polluted in ſociety, our meetings, and Converſations together being for the greateſt part nothing but a Commerce, and Interchange of ſin and vanity.

We breath up and down in an infected Air, and

are

are very receptive of the Infection by our own corruption within us. We readily turn the things we poſſeſs here to Occaſions, and Inſtruments of ſin, and there is no Liberty, nor delight in their uſe without abuſing them, how few are they, that can carry (as they ſay) a full Cup even, that can have digeſtion ſtrong enough for the right uſe of Great Places and Eſtates, that can bear Preferment without Pride, and Riches without Covetouſneſs, and Eaſe without Wantonneſs.

Then, as thoſe Earthly Inheritances are ſtained with ſin in their uſe; ſo what Grief, and ſtrife, and Contentions about Obtaining or Retaining them, Doth not matter of Poſſeſſion, this ſame *Meum* and *tuum* divide many times the affections of thoſe who are knit together in Nature or other ſtrait tyes, and prove the very Apple of ſtrife betwixt neareſt Friends?

If we trace great Eſtates to their firſt Original, how few will there be found, that owe not their Beginning, either to Fraud, or Rapine, or Oppreſſion, and the greateſt Empires, and Kingdomes in the World have had their foundations laid in blood. Are not thoſe defiled Inheritances?

That withereth not] A borrowed ſpeech alluding to the decaying of plants and flowers that bud, and flouriſh at a certain time of the year, and then fade and wither, and in Winter are as if they were dead.

And this is the 3d. diſadvantage of Poſſeſſions, and all things worldly, that they abide not in one Eſtate; but are in a more Uncertain, and Irregular Inconſtancy, then either the flowers and plants of the Field

Field, or the Moon, from which they are called sub-lunary: like *Nebuchadnezzar's* Image, degenerating by degrees, and in the end into a mixture of Iron and clay.

The Excellency then of this Inheritance is, that it is free from all those evils, falls not under the stroak of time, comes not within the compass of its Syth, that hath so large a Compass, and cuts down all other things.

There is nothing in it weighing it towards Corruption. 'Tis Immortal, Everlasting, for 'tis the fruition of the Immortal Everlasting God by Immortal souls, and the Body rejoyned with it, shall likewise be Immortal, having put on Incorruption as the Apostle speaks.

That fadeth not away] No spot of sin, nor sorrow there, all pollution wiped away, and all tears with it, no Envy, nor strife, not as here among men one supplanting another, one pleading, and Fighting against another, dividing this point of Earth, with fire and sword, No, this Inheritance is not the less by division, by being parted amongst so many Brethen, every one hath it all, each his Crown, and all agreeing in casting them down before his Throne from whom they have received them, and in the harmony of his Praises.

This Inheritance is often called a Kingdome, and a Crown of Glory. This word may allude to those Garlands of the Antients, and this is its property, that the Flowers in it are all *Amaranthes*, as a certain plant is named, and so its called. 1 *Pet.* 5. 4. *a Crown of Glory that fadeth not away.*

No change at all there, no Winter and Summer; not

not like the poor comforts here, but a Bleſs alwayes flouriſhing. The grief of the Saints here, is not ſo much the changes of outward things, as of their inward Comforts. *ſuavis hora, ſed brevis mora.* Sweet preſences of God they ſometimes have; but they are ſhort, and often interrupted, but *there*; no Cloud ſhall come betwixt them, and their Sun, they ſhall behold Him in his full brightneſs for ever; and as no Change in their beholding, ſo no wearineſs, nor abatement of their Delight in beholding. They ſing a new Song, alwayes the ſame, and yet alwayes New. The ſweeteſt of our Muſick, one day of it will weary them that are moſt delighted with it, what we have here cloyes; but ſatisfies not; the Joyes above, never cloy, and yet alwayes ſatisfie.

We ſhould here Conſider the laſt property of this Inheritance, namely the Certainty of it.

Reſerv'd in Heaven for you. But that is connected with the following verſe, and ſo will be fitly joyned with it. Now for ſome Uſe of all this.

If theſe things were believed, they would perſwade for themſelves, we needed not add any intreaties to move you to ſeek after this inheritance: Have we not experience enough of the vanity, and miſery of things Corruptible? and are not a great part of our dayes already ſpent amongſt them? is it not time to conſider whether we be provided of any thing ſurer and better, then what we have here? if we have any Inheritance to go home to after our wandering? or can ſay with the Apoſtle. 2*Cor.*5.1. *we know that if our earthly houſe of this Tabernacle were diſſolved, we have a building of God, an*

house not made with hands, Eternal in the Heavens.

If those things gain our assent while we hear them yet it dies so; None almost retire themselves after, to follow forth those thoughts, and to make a work indeed of them, but busy their heads rather another way, building Castles in the air, and spinning out their thoughts in vain Contrivances. Happy are they whose hearts the spirit of God sets, and fixes upon this Inheritance; they may joyn in with the Apostle. And say as here, *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath begotten us again unto this lively Hope, to this inheritance incorruptible, undefiled and that fadeth not away.*

Verse. 5.

Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation. ready to be revealed in the last time

'Tis no doubt a great Contentment to the Children of God to hear of the Excellencies of the life to come, they are not readily weary of that subject, yet there is one doubt, that if it be not removed may dampt their Delight, in hearing and considering of all the rest. The Richer the Estate is it will the more kindle the Malice, and Dilligence of their Enemies to deprive them of it, and to cut them short of possessing it. And this they know, that those spiritual Powers that seek to ruin them, do overmatch them far, both in Craft and Force.

Against

Againſt the fears of this, the Apoſtle comfo. Heirs of Salvation, aſſuring them that as the Eſt they look for is Excellent, ſo it is Certain and ſafe, laid up there where it is out of the reach of all adverſe Powers. *Reſerv'd in Heaven for you.* Beſides that this is a further evidence of the worth and excellency of this Inheritance, it makes it ſure, it confirms what was ſaid of its Excellency, for it muſt be a thing of greateſt worth that is laid up in the higheſt, and beſt place of the world, namely in Heaven for you. Where nothing that is impure once enters, much leſs is laid up, and kept. Thus the Land where this Inheritance lyes, makes good all that hath been ſpoken of the Dignity and Riches of it.

But further, as it is a rich and pleaſant Country where it lyeth, it hath this priviledge, to be the alone Land of Reſt, and Peace, free from all poſſibility of Invaſion. There is no ſpoiling of it, and laying it waſte, and defacing its Beauty, by leading Armies into't, and making it the ſeat of war, no noiſe of Drums, nor Trumpets, no Inundations of one People driving out another, and ſitting down in their Poſſeſſions; In a word; as there is nothing there ſubject to decay of it ſelfe, ſo neither is it in danger of Fraud or Violence. When our Saviour ſpeaks of this ſame Happineſs, *St. Mat. 6. 20.* in a like term, whats here called an *Inheritance*, is there called a *Treaſure*. He expreſſes the permanency of it, by theſe two, that it hath neither Moth nor Ruſt in it ſelfe to corrupt it, nor can Thieves break through and ſteal it. There is a worm at the root of all our Enjoyments here, Corrupting cauſes with-

in themſelves, and beſides that, they are expoſed to injury from without, that may deprive us of them, how many ſtately Pallaces that have been poſſibly divers years in building? hath fire upon a very ſmall beginning deſtroyed in a few hours? What great hopes of gain by traffick hath one Tempeſt mocked, and diſſapointed? How many that have thought their Poſſeſſions very ſure, yet have loſt them by ſome trick of Law, and others (as in time of war) driven from them by the Sword; nothing free from all danger but this *Inheritance*, that is laid up in the hands of God, and kept in Heaven for us. The higheſt ſtations in the world, namely the Eſtate of Kings, they are but Mountains of prey, one robbing and ſpoiling another: but in that holy Mountain above, there is none to hurt, nor ſpoil, nor offer violence. What the Prophet ſpeaks of the Church here, 'tis more perfectly and Eminently true of it above. *Iſai.* 65. 25.

This is indeed a neceſſary condition of our joy in the thoughts of this happy Eſtate, that we have ſome perſwaſion of our Propriety, that 'tis ours: that we do not ſpeak, and hear of it as Travellers paſſing by a pleaſant place do behold, and diſcourſe of its fair ſtructure, the ſweetneſs of the Seat, the planting, of the Gardens, and Meadowes that are about it, and ſo paſs on; having no further intereſt in it; but when we hear of this glorious Inheritance, this Treaſure, this Kingdom that is Pure, and Rich, and Laſting, we may add, it is ſo called, and it is Mine, it is reſerved in Heaven and reſerv'd for me, I have received the Evidences, and the Earneſt of it, and as it is kept ſafe for me, ſo I ſhall likewiſe

be preſerv'd to it, and that's the other part of the Certainty, that compleats the Comforts of it. ſee *Eph.* 1. 14.

The ſalvation that Chriſt hath purchaſed is indeed laid up in Heaven, but we that ſeek after it, are on Earth, Compaſſed about with Dangers, and Tentations. What avails it us that our Salvation is in Haven, in the place of ſafety and quietneſs, while we our ſelves are toſſed upon the ſtormy Seas of this World, amidſt Rocks and ſhelves, every hour in hazard of ſhipwrack, our Inheritance is in a ſure hand indeed, our Enemies cannot come at it, but they may overrun and deſtroy us at their pleaſure, for we are in the midſt of them. Thus might we think, and complain, and loſe the ſweetneſs of all our other thoughts concerning Heaven, if there were not as firm a Promiſe for our own ſafety in the midſt of our dangers, as there is of the ſafety of our Inheritance that is out of Danger.

The aſſurance is full, thus, it is kept for us in Heaven, and we kept on Earth for it, as it is Reſerved for us, we are no leſs ſurely Preſerv'd to it. There is here. 1. The Eſtate it ſelfe, Salvation. 2. The preſervation, or ſecuring of thoſe that expect it. 3. The Time of full Poſſeſſion. *In the laſt time.*

Unto Salvation] Before it's called an Inheritance, here more particularly what meant by that, namely Salvation. This is more expreſly ſure, being a deliverance from Miſery, and imports withal the Poſſeſſion of perfect Happineſs. The firſt part of our Happineſs is to be freed from thoſe Miſeries to which we are ſubject by our Guiltineſs. To be ſet

free

ſree from the Curſe of the Law, and the wrath of God, from everlaſting death. 2. From all kind of mortality or decaying. 3. From all power and ſtain of Sin. 4. From all Temptation. 5. From all the Griefs and Afflictions of this Life. To have the perfection of Grace, to be full of Holineſs, and the perfection of Bliſs, full of joy, in the continual Viſion of God, but how little are we able to ſay of this our Apoſtle here teacheth us, that it is vailed to us, only ſo much ſhines through, as we are capable of here: but the Revealed knowledge of it is only in the Poſſeſſion. 'Tis *to be revealed in the laſt time.*

Then there is, their Preſervation, *Kept.* 2. The cauſes of it. *By the power of God, through Faith.* the Inheritance is kept not only in ſafety; but in quietneſs. The Children of God for whom it is kept, while they are here, are kept ſafe indeed, but not Unmolleſted, and Unaſſaulted, they have Enemies, and ſuch as are Stirring, and Cunning, and Powerful; but in the midſt of them, they are Guarded, and Defended, they periſh not; according to the Prayer of our Saviour poured out for them, *Joh.* 17. 16. *I pray not that thou ſhouldeſt take them out of the world: but that thou ſhouldeſt keep them from the Evil.*

They have the Prince of the power of the Air, and all his Armies, all the forces he can make againſt them. Though his power is nothing but Tyranny, and Uſurpation, yet becauſe once they were under his yoak, he beſtirres himſelfe to purſue them, when they are led forth from their Captivity, as *Exod.* 14. 5. 9. *Pharaoh* with all his Chariots, and Horſes, and Horſemen purſues after the Iſraelites going out of *Egypt.*

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The word in the Original here translated *Kept*, is a Military term, used for those who are *kept* as in a Fort, or Garrison Town besieged. So Satan is still raising Batterries against this Fort, using all wayes to take it, by Strength, or Stratagem, unwearied in his Assaults, and very skilful to know his Advantages; and where we are weakest, there to set on. And besides all this, He hath Intelligence with a Party within us, ready to betray us to him; so that it were impossible for us to hold out, were there not another Watch, and Guard then our own, and other walls, and Bulwarks then any that our skill and Industry can raise for our own Defence. In this then is our safety, that there is a Power above our own, yea, and above all our Enemies, that guards us. *Salvation* it selfe our Walls and Bulwarks. We ought to watch, but when we do in Obedience to our Commander, the Captain of our Salvation, yet it is his own Watching, who *sleeps* not, nor so much as *slumbers*, 'tis that preserves us, and makes ours not to be in vain. *Psal.* 126. 1. *Isa.* 27. 3. And therefore those two, are joyntly Commanded. *Watch and Pray that ye enter not into Temtation.* *Watch*, there's the necessity of our Diligence. *Pray*, there's the Insufficiency of it, and the necessity of his Watching, by whose Power we are effectually preserv'd, and that Power is our Fort. *Isa.* 26. 1. *Salvation hath God appointed for walls and Bulwarks*, what more safe then to be wall'd with *Salvation* it self, so *Prov.* 18. 10. *The Name of the Lord is a strong tower, the Righteous fly into it and are safe.*

Now the Causes are two. 1. Supream, *the Power of God*, 2. Subordinate: *Faith*. The Supreme Power,

Power of God is that on which depends our Stability and Perſeverance. When we conſider how weak we are in our ſelves, yea the very ſtrongeſt amongſt us and how Aſſaulted, we wonder, and Juſtly we may, that any can continue one day in the Eſtate of Grace: but when we look on the ſtrength by which we are guarded, the power of God; then we ſee the reaſon of ſtability to the end. For Omnipotency ſupports us, and the Everlaſting Armes are under us.

Then Faith is the 2d. cauſe of our Preſervation; becauſe it applies the firſt Cauſe, the *Power of God.* our Faith layes hold upon this Power, and this Power ſtrengthens Faith, and ſo we are preſerved. It puts us within thoſe walls, ſets the Soul within the Guard of the Power of God, which by ſelfe confidence, and vain preſuming in its own ſtrength is expoſed to all kind of danger. Faith is a humble ſelf-denying Grace, makes the Chriſtian nothing in himſelf, and all in God.

The weakeſt Perſons that are within a ſtrong Place, Women and Children, though they were not able to reſiſt the Enemy if they were alone, yet ſo long as the place wherein they are, is of ſufficient ſtrength and well man'd and every way accommodate to hold out, they are in ſafety, thus the weakeſt Believer is ſafe, becauſe by believing he is within the ſtrongeſt of all Defences. Faith is the Victory, and Chriſt ſets his ſtrength againſt Satans, and when the Chriſtian is hard beſet with ſome Tentation, too ſtrong for himſelfe, then he looks up to him that is the great Conquerour of the powers of darkneſs, and calls to him, Now Lord aſſiſt thy Servant in this Encounter, and

put

put to thy ſtrength, that the Glory may be thine. Thus faith is ſuch an Engine as draws in the power of God, and his Son Jeſus into the works, and conflicts that it hath in hand. *This is our victory even our faith.* 1. *John.* 5. 4.

'Tis the property of *a good Chriſtian* to magnifie the power of God, to have high thoughts of it, and therefore 'tis his Priviledge to find ſafety in that power. *David* cannot ſatiſfie himſelfe with one, or two Expreſſions of it, but delights in multiplying them. *Pſa.* 18. 1. *The Lord is my Rock, and my Fortreſs and my deliverer, my God, my ſtrength, in whom I will truſt, my Buckler, and the horn of my ſalvation, and my high tower.* Faith looks above all, both that which the ſoul hath, and that which it wants, and anſwers all Doubts, and Fears with this Almighty Power upon which it reſts.

To be revealed in the laſt time:] This Salvation is that great work wherein God intended to manifeſt the Glory of his Grace, contriv'd before Time, And in the ſeverall Ages of the world brought forward, after the decreed manner, and the full accompliſhment of it, reſerved for the End of Time.

The ſouls of the faithfull, do enter poſſeſſion when they remove from their houſes of Clay; yet is not their happineſs compleat till that great day of the appearing of Jeſus Chriſt; they are naturally Imperfect till their bodies be raiſed, and rejoyned to their Souls, to partake together of their Bliſs. And they are miſtically Imperfect, till all the reſt of the members of Jeſus Chriſt be added to them.

But then ſhall their joy be abſolutely full when

both their own bodies, and the misticall body of Christ shall be Glorified, when all the Children of that glorious Family shall meet, and sit down to that great Mariage Supper at their Fathers Table. Then shall the Musick of that new song be full, when there is not one wanting of those that are appointed to sing it for Eternity. In that day shall our Lord Jesus *be glorified in his saints and admired in all them that believe.* 2 *Thes.* 1. 10.

You see what it is that the Gospel offers you, and you may gather, how great both your folly, and your guiltiness will be, if you neglect, and slight so great salvation when 'tis brought to you, and you are intreated to receive it, this is all that the preaching of the word aimes at, and yet who hearkens to it. How few lay hold on this Eternal life? This Inheritance, this Crown that is held forth to all that hear of it.

Oh that you could be perswaded, to be saved, that you would be willing to embrace salvation. You think you would, but if it be so, then I may say, though you would be saved, yet your custome of sin, your Love to sin, and Love to the world, will not suffer you. And these will still hinder you, unless you put on holy Resolutions to break through them and trample them under foot, and take this kingdome by a hand of violence, that God is so well pleased with, he is willingly overcome by that force, and gives this kingdome most willingly, where it is so taken, 'tis not attain'd by slothfulness, and sitting still with folded hands. It must be invaded with strength of faith, with armies of Prayers, and Teats, and they that set upon it thus are sure to take it.

Consider

Conſider what we are doing, how we miſplace our diligence on things that abide not, or we abide not to enjoy them. *We have no abiding City here* (ſaith the Apoſtle) but he adds, that which comforts the Citizens of the new *Jeruſalem* : *wee look for one to come whoſe builder and maker is God.* Hear not thoſe things idley, as if they concerned you not, but let them move you to Reſolution and Actions ſay, as they ſaid of *Canaan*, *'tis a good land, Let's go up and poſſeſs it.* Learn to uſe what you have here as Travellers, and let your home, your Inheritance, your Treaſure be on high, which is by far the richeſt and the ſafeſt, and if it be ſo with you, then *Where your Treaſure is, there will your hearts be alſo.*

Verſe. 6.

Wherein ye greatly Rejoyce, though now for a ſeaſon (if need be) ye are in heavineſs through manifold temptations.

THe ſame Motives cannot beget contrary paſſions in the ſoul, therefore the Apoſtle reduces the mixture of ſorrowing, and Rejoycing that is uſuall in the heart of a Chriſtian, to the different cauſes of them, and ſhews which of the two hath the ſtronger cauſe, and therefore is alwayes predominant, Entertains it and Conſiders it aright.

His Scope is to ſtir up, and ſtrengthen ſpirituall joy in his afflicted Brethen, and therefore haveing ſet the matter of it before them in the preceeding *verſes*,

he now applies it, and expreſly oppoſes it to their diſtreſſes.

Some read thoſe words exhortatively, *In which r joyce ye*, 'tis ſo intended, but I conceive it ſerves that end better indicatively, as we now read it, *in which ye rejoyce*. It exhorts more inſinuatively and perſwaſively that it may be ſo, to urge it on them that it is ſo. Thus St. *Paul*, *Acts*. 26. 27. *King Agrippa believeſt thou the prophets? I know that thou believeſt*. And ſtraight he anſwered, *Thou almoſt perſwadeſt me to be a Chriſtian*. This implies how juſt, and how reaſonable it is, that the things ſpoken of ſhould make them glad, they will Rejoyce in thoſe: Yea do Rejoyce, certainly if you know and conſider what the cauſes of your joy are, ye cannot chuſe but find it within you, and in ſuch a meaſure as it ſwallowes up all your temporary Sorrowes, how great and how many ſoever their cauſes be.

We are then to conſider ſeverally thoſe bitter waters, and ſweet, this Sorrow, and this Joy 1. in their Springs 2. in their Streams.

And firſt they are called *Temptations*, and *manifold Temptations*. The habits of divine ſupernatural Grace, are not acquirable by humane ſtudy, or Induſtry or by Exercciſe, they are of immediate Infuſion from Heaven, yet are they infus'd to that end, that they may act and exerciſe themſelves in the ſeverall conditions and occurrences of a Chriſtians life, and by that they grow ſtronger. Whatſoever oppoſitions or difficulties Grace meets with in its acting, go under this generall name of *Temptations*. It is not neceſſary to reckon up the variety of ſenſes of this

this word, in its full latitude, how God is ſaid to tempt man, and how 'tis ſaid that he tempts him not, how man tempts God, and how 'tis ſaid that God is not tempted, how Satan tempts men, and men one another, and a man himſelfe. All thoſe are ſeverall acceptations of this word, But *Temptations* here meant, are they, by which men are tempted, and particularly the Saints of God, and though there is nothing in the words, that may not agree to all ſorts of Temptations the godly are ſubject to, yet I conceive it is particularly meant of their Afflictions, and Diſtreſſes as the Apoſtle *James* likewiſe uſes it *Chap.* 1. *ver.* 2.

And they are ſo called, becauſe they give particular and notable proof of the temper of a Chriſtians ſpirit, and draw forth Evidence both of the Truth, and the meaſure of the Grace that is in them, if they fail and are foyled as ſometimes they are, this convinces them of that humane frailty, and weakneſs that is in them, and ſo humbles them, and drives them out of themſelves to depend upon another for more ſtrength, and better ſucceſs in after Encounters. If they acquit themſelves like Chriſtians indeed (the Lord managing and aſſiſting that Grace which he hath given them) then all their Valour, and Strength, and Victories return to his praiſe, from whom they have received all.

A Man is not onely unknown to others but to himſelf, that hath never met with ſuch difficulties, as require Faith and Chriſtian Fortitude and Patience to ſurmount them, how ſhall a man know whether his meekneſs and calmneſs of ſpirit be reall or not while he meets with no provocation, nothing that

contradicts or crosses him: but when somewhat sets upon him that is in it self very unpleasant and grievous to him, and yet if in that case he retains his Moderation of spirit, and flyes not out into Impatience, neither against God, nor Men, this gives experiment of the truth and soundness of that Grace in him; whereas standing water that's clear at top while 'tis untouch'd, yet if it have mudd at the bottome, stirre it a little, and it rises presently.

'Tis not altogether unprofitable, yea 'tis much wisdom in Christians to be arming themselves against such Temptations as may befall them hereafter, though they have not as yet met with them, to labour to overcome them before hand, to suppose the hardest things that may be incident to them, and to put on the strongest Resolutions they can attain unto; yet all that, is but an imaginary effect; and therefore there is no assurance that the victory is any more then imaginary too, till it come to Action, and then they that have spoken, and thought very confidently, may prove but (as he said of the Athenians) *fortes in tabula*, Patient, and Couragious in Picture, or fancy, and notwithstanding all their armes, and dexterity in handling them by way of exercise, may be foully defeated when they are to fight in earnest. The Children of *Ephraim* being armed, and carrying bowes (says the *Psalmist*) *Psa.* 78. 9. *yet turned back in the day of battell.* 'Tis the battell tries the Souldier, and the storm the pilot, how would it appear that Christians can be themselves not onely patient but cheerfull in Poverty, in Disgrace, and attempts and Persecutions, if it were not often their Lot to meet with those, He that framed the heart knows

it

it to be but deceitfull, and he that gives Grace knows the weakneſs, and ſtrength of it exactly, yet He is pleaſed to ſpeak thus, that by afflictions and hard taſks he tries what is in the hearts of his Children: for the word of God ſpeaks to Men, and therefore it ſpeaks the Language of the Children of Men: thus *Gen.* 22. 12. *Now I know that thou feareſt God, ſeeing thou haſt not with held thy Son, thine onely Son from me.*

God delights to call forth his Champions to meet with great Temptations, to make them bear Croſſes of more then ordinary weight, as Commanders in War put Men of moſt valour, and skill upon the hardeſt ſervices. God ſets ſome ſtrong furious triall upon a ſtrong Chriſtian made ſtrong by his own grace, and by his victory, makes it appear, to the world that though there is a great deal of counterfeit coyne of profeſſion in Religion, yet ſome there are, that have the power, the reality of it, and that 'tis not an Invention, but there is Truth in it, that the invincible Grace, the very ſpirit of God dwells in the hearts of true believers, that he hath a number that doe not onely ſpeak big, but doe indeed and in good earneſt deſpiſe the world, and overcome it by his ſtrength. Some men take delight to ſee ſome kind of beaſts fight together, but to ſee a Chriſtian mind encountering ſome great Affliction and conquering it, to ſee his valour, in not ſinking at the hardeſt diſtreſſes of this life, nor the affrightfulleſt End of it, the cruelleſt kindes of death for his ſake, this is (as he ſaid) *dignum Deo ſpectaculum*, this is a combat that God delights to look upon, and he is not a meer beholder in it; for tis the power

of

of his own grace that Enables and Supports the Christian in all those Conflicts and Temptations.

Multitude of Temptations, and of divers kindes, many and manifold. It were no hard condition to have a Triall now and then, and long ease, and prosperity betwixt; but to be plied with one Affliction at the heels of another, to have them come thronging in by multitudes, and of different kindes, uncouth, unaccustomed evils, such as a Man hath not been acquainted with before, this is that which is often the portion of those that are the beloved of God. *Psa.* 42. 7. *Deep calleth unto deep at the noise of thy water spouts, all thy waves, and thy billows are gone over me.*

Ye are in Heavinesse] This the Apostle blames not, but aimes at the moderating of it, seek not altogether to dry up this stream, but to bound it, and keep it within its banks. Grace doth not destroy the life of Nature, but add's to it a life more excellent, yea Grace doth not onely permitt but requires some feeling of Afflictions. There is an affected Pride of spirit in some men, instead of Patience, Sutable to the Doctrine of the Stoicks (as 'tis usually taken) they strive not to feel at all the afflictions that are on them, but this is to despise the Correction of the Lord, which is alike forbidden, as fainting under it. *Heb.* 12. We should not stop our ears, but *Mic.* 6. 9. *Hear the Rod, and him that hath appointed it,* as the Prophet speaks. Where there is no feeling at all, there can be no Patience. Consider it as the hand of God, and thence argue the soul into submission. *Psa.* 39. 9. *I was dumb, I opened not my mouth, because thou didst it.* But this Heavinesse is mitigated,

gated, and ſet as it were within its banks, betwixt theſe two Conſiderations, 1. The Utility of it. 2. The Brevity, profitableneſs, and ſhortneſs of it.

To a worldly Man great Gain, ſweetens the hardeſt Labour, and to a Chriſtian, Spiritual profit, and Advantage may do much to move Him to take well with thoſe Afflictions that are otherwiſe very unpleaſant, though they are not joyous for the preſent, *Heb.* 12. 11. Yet this allayes the ſorrow of them, the fruit that grows out of them, *that peaceable fruit of Righteouſneſs.*

A bundle of folly is in the heart of a Child, but the Rod of Correction ſhall beat it out, ſaith *Solomon*. Tho the Children of God are truly (as our Saviour calls them) the Children of wiſdom: Yet being renewed only in part, they are not altogether free from thoſe follies that call for this Rod to beat them out, and ſometimes have ſuch a bundle of follies as require a bundle of Rods to be ſpent upon it, *many and manifold afflictions.*

'Tis not an eaſy matter to be drawn from, nor to be beaten from the Love of this World, and this is that which God mainly requires of his Children, that they be not in Love with the World, nor the things of it, for that is contrary to the Love of God, and ſo far as that is entertain'd, this is wanting. And if in the midſt of afflictions, they are ſometimes ſubject to this diſeaſe, how would it grow upon them with Eaſe and Proſperity? when they are beaten from one worldly Folly or Delight, they are ready through Natures corruption to lay hold upon ſome other, being thruſt out from it at one door, to enter at ſome other, and as Children unwilling to be weaned,

ed, if one breaſt be imbitter'd, they ſeek to the other, and therefore there muſt be ſomewhat to drive them from that too. Thus 'tis clear, there is need, yea great need of Afflictions, yea of many Afflictions, that the Saints be *chaſtened by the Lord, that they may not be Condemned with the World.* 1 *Cor.* 11. 32.

Many Reſemblances there are for Illuſtration of this Truth, in things both of Nature, and of Art. Some common, and others choycer. But this is not needful. The experience of Chriſtians tells them, how eaſily they grow Proud and Secure and Carnal with a little Eaſe, and with outward things going ſmoothly with them, and therefore what unhappineſs were it for them to be much happy that way.

Let us learn then that in regard of our preſent frailty there is need of afflictions, and ſo not promiſe our ſelves Exemption, how calm ſoever our Seas are for the preſent; and then for the Number and Meaſure and Weight of them, to Reſign that wholly into the hands of our wiſe Father, and Phiſitian, who perfectly knows our mould, and our maladies, and what kind, and quantity of chaſtiſment is needful for our cure.

Though now for a ſeaſon (if need be) ye are in heavineſs] The other Conſideration that moderates this Heavineſs is, its ſhortneſs: becauſe we willingly forget Eternity, therefore this moment ſeems much in our eyes, but if we could look upon it aright, of how litle concernment is it, what be our condition here, if it were as proſperous as we could Wiſh or Imagine, it is but for a *little ſeaſon*, the Rich man in the Goſpell talk'd of Many Years; but *Thou fool this night*

ſhall

ſhall thy Soul be required of thee, was the longeſt period. The many years quickly drawn to a very great abatement, and if full of pains and griefs, thoſe do help to put an end to themſelvs, and haſten to it. Then well might St. *Auſtin* ſay. *Hic ure, cæde, modo ibi parcas*, uſe me here as pleaſeth thee, ſo as that hereafter it may be well with me.

wherein] This Word though it cannot fall amiſs being referr'd to any particular, to which Interpreters have appropriated it, yet it is rather to be taken Relative to the whole complex ſenſe of the preceding *verſes*, concerning the hope of Glory. In this thing ye rejoyce, that ye are begotten again, that there is ſuch an Inheritance: and you made heirs of it, that it is kept for you, and you for it, that nothing can come betwixt you and it, to diſſapoint you of poſſeſſing and Enjoying it, though there be many Deſerts and Mountains, and Seas in the way yet you are aſcertain'd, that you ſhall come ſafe thither.

This is but one thing, but the cauſe of your grief is *Temptations*, and *manifold Temptations*, yet this one thing weighs down all that Multitude, naturally the heart being grieved in one thing, looks out for its eaſe to ſome other, and there is uſually ſomewhat that is a mans great Comfort, that he turns his thoughts to, when he is croſ'd and afflicted in other things, but herein is the folly of the world that the things they chuſe for their Reſuge and Comfort, are ſuch as may change themſelves, and turn into diſcomfort and ſorrow, but the godly man, that is the fool in the natural Mans eyes, goes beyond all the reſt in his wiſe choyce in this. He riſes

above all that is ſubject to change, pitches his Anchor within the Vail. That in which he rejoyceth is ſtill matter of joy unmoveable and unalterable, though not only his eſtate, but the whole world were turn'd upſide down, yet this is the ſame, or rather in the *Pſalmiſts* words; *Though the Earth were removed and the greateſt Mountains caſt into the Sea; yet will not we fear.* When we ſhall receive that Rich, and Pure and Abiding Inheritance, that Salvation that ſhall be revealed in the laſt time, and when Time it ſelf ſhall ceaſe to be, then there ſhall be no more reckoning of our joyes by dayes and houres: But they ſhall run parallel with Eternity. When all our Love that is ſcatter'd and parcell'd out upon the vanities amongſt which we are here, ſhall be united and gathered into one, and fixed upon God, and the ſoul fill'd with the delight of his preſence.

The Sorrow was limited, and bounded by theſe Conſiderations we ſpoke of, but this joy, this Exaltation, and leaping for Joy (for ſo it is) is not bounded, it cannot be too much; Its meaſure is to know no Meaſure, the Afflictions, the matter of Heavineſs are but a tranſient touch of pain; but that whereon this joy is built is moſt permanent, the Meaſure of it cannot exceed, for the matter of it is Infinit and Eternal, beyond all Hyperbole, there is no Expreſſion we have can reach it, much leſs go beyond it, it ſelfe is the Hyperbole, ſtill ſurpaſſing all that can be ſaid of it, even in the midſt of Heavineſs it ſelf, ſuch is this Joy, that can maintain it ſelf in the depth of ſorrow, this Oyl of gladneſs ſtill ſwims above, and cannot be drowned by all the floods of

of Affliction, yea 'tis often moſt ſweet, in the greateſt diſtreſs. Then the ſoul reliſhes ſpiritual Joy beſt, when it is not glutted with worldly delights, but finds them turn'd into Bitterneſs.

For Application. In that we profeſs our ſelves Chriſtians, we all pretend to be the Sons of God, and ſo Heirs of this Glory; and if each man were particularly ask't, he would ſay, he hoped to attain it: but if there were nothing elſe, this may abundantly convince us, that the greateſt part of us delude our ſelves and are deceived in this, for how few are there, that do really find this height of Joy, Gladneſs and exultation, in their thoughts and hopes of it, that do daily more refreſh and glad themſelves with the Conſiderarion of that which is laid up for them above, then with all their Enjoyments here below.

Conſider how the newes of ſome ſmall outward advantage that is to come to us, raiſes our light vain Hearts, and makes them leap within us, and yet this newes of a Kingdom prepared for us (if indeed we be Believers) ſtirres us not, our hearts are as litle affected with it, as if it concern'd us not at all, and this is too clear an Evidence againſt us, that indeed it concerns us not, our portion as yet is not in it.

In what a fool's Paradiſe will Men be with the thoughts of worthleſs things, and ſuch things too, as they ſhall never obtain, nor ever ſhall have any further being, then what they have in their Fancy. And how will men frequently roll over in their minds the thoughts of any pleaſing good they hope for? and yet We, that ſay we have hopes of the Glory

to

to come, can paſs many dayes without one hour ſpent in the Rejoycing thoughts of the Happineſs we look for. If any of a mean Condition for the preſent were made ſure to become very Rich, and be advanced to great honour within a week, and after that, to live to a great age in that high Eſtate, enjoying Health and all immaginable Pleaſures, judge ye, whether in the few dayes betwixt the knowledge of thoſe Newes, and the enjoying them, would not the thoughts of that he were to attain to, be frequent with him, and be allwayes wellcome. There is no compariſon betwixt all we can Imagine this way, and the hopes we ſpeak of, and yet how ſeldome are our thoughts upon thoſe, and how faint, and ſlender our Rejoycing in them? Can we deny, that 'tis unbelief of thoſe things, that cauſeth this neglect and forgetting of them? The diſcourſe, the tongue of Men and Angels cannot beget divine belief of the happineſs to come, only he that gives it, gives Faith likewiſe to apprehend it, and lay hold upon it, and upon believing to be fill'd with Joy in the hopes of it.

Verſe. 7.

Verſe. 7.

That the tryal of your faith being much more precious then of Gold that periſheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praiſe, and honour, and Glory at the appearing of Jeſus Chriſt.

THe way of the Juſt (ſaith *Solomon*) *is as the ſhining light that ſhineth more and more to the perfect day.* Still making forward, and aſcending towards perfection, moving as faſt when they are clouded with affliction as at any time elſe, yea, all that ſeems to work againſt them, furthers them. Thoſe graces that would poſſibly grow heavy and unweildy, by too much eaſe; are held in breath and increaſe their activity, and ſtrength by Conflict. Divine grace even in the heart of weak and ſinful man, is an invincible thing. Drown it in the waters of Adverſity, it riſes more beautiful, as not being drowned indeed, but only waſh't, throw it into the furnace of fiery tryals, it comes out purer, and loſes nothing but the droſs which our corrupt nature mixes with it. Thus here the Apoſtle expounds the *(if need be)* of the former *verſe*, and ſo juſtifies the joy in Affliction, which there he ſpeaks of, by their utility and Faiths advantage by them, 'tis ſo tried that it ſhall appear in its full brightneſs at the Revelation of Jeſus Chriſt.

The

The peculiar treasure of a Christian, being the Grace that he receives from Heaven, and particularly that Soveraign Grace of Faith, whatsoever he can be assur'd will better him any way in this, he will not only bear it patiently, but gladly imbrace it. *Rom.* 5. 3. Therefore the Apostle sets this before his Brethren in those words of this *verse.* where is; 1. The Worth and Excellency of Faith. 2. The usefulness of Temptations in relation to it.

The trial of Faith, is call'd *more precious*, a work of more worth then the tryal of Gold; because Faith it selfe is of more value then Gold, the Apostle chuses this comparison, as fitting his purpose for both, for the Illustration of the worth of Faith, and likewise the use of Temptations, representing the one by Gold, and the other by the trying of Gold in the Fire.

The worth of Gold is. 1. Real, the purest and preciousest of all mettals; having many excellent properties beyond them, as they that write of the nature of Gold observe. 2. Far greater in the Esteem and Opinion of Men. See how Men hurry up and down, over Sea, and Land unwearied in their pursuit with hazard of life, and often with the loss of Uprightness, and a good Conscience; and not only thus Esteem it in it selfe; but make it the Rule of their Esteem, one of another, valuing Men less, or more, as they are more, or less furnish't with it, and we see at what a height that is, for things we would commend much, we borrow its name to them, *viz. Golden Mediocrity*, and that Age which they would call the best of all, they name it the *Golden Age*, and as *Seneca* observes describing heavenly things

things (as *Ovid* the Suns Pallace, and Chariot) ſtill Gold is the word for all.

And the Holy Scriptures deſcending to our reach, do ſet forth the Riches of the new *Jeruſalem*, by it. *Rev.* 21. And the Excellency of Chriſt. *Cant.* 5. 11. 14. And here the precioufneſs of Faith, whereof Chriſt is the Object, is ſaid to be *more precious then Gold.*

I will not inſiſt in the parallell of Faith with Gold in the other Qualities of it, as that it is pure, and ſollid, as Gold. And that 'its moſt ductile, and malleable as gold, beyond all other mettals, it plies any way with the Will of God. But then Faith truly Enriches the ſoul, And as Gold Anſwers all things, ſo Faith gives the Soul propriety to all the rich Conſolations of the Goſpel, to all the promiſes of Life, and ſalvation, to all needful Bleſſings, it draws vertue from Chriſt to ſtrengthen it ſelf, and all other Graces.

And thus 'tis not onely precious as Gold, but goes far above the Compariſon 'tis *more precious*, yea *much more precious.* 1. in its Originall, the other is dig'd out of the bowels of the Earth: but the Mine of this Gold is above, it comes from Heaven. 2. In its Nature, anſwerable to its Originall, it is Immateriall, Spirituall and pure, we refine Gold, and make it purer, but when we receive Faith pure of it ſelf, we mix droſs with it, and make it Impure, by the allay of Unbelief. 3. in its Endurance flowing from the former, it periſheth not, Gold is a thing in it ſelfe Corruptible, and periſhing, and to particular owners, it periſheth in their loſs of it, being depriv'd of it any way.

Other Graces are likewiſe tryed in the ſame Furnace: but Faith is named as the Root of all the reſt.

Sharp afflictions give a Christian a tryal of his Love to God, whether it be single, and for himself or not; for then it will be the same when he strikes, as when he Embraces, and in the fire of affliction will rather grow the hotter, and be more taken off from the world and set upon him. Again the Grace of Patience is put particularly upon triall in distresses: but both these spring from Faith. for Love rises from a right and strong belief of the Goodness of God, and patience, from a persuasion of the Wisdom and Love of God, and the truth of his promises. He hath said, *I will not fail thee.* And that we shall not be tempted above our strength, and he will give the Issue. Now the belief of those, Causes patience. *The triall of faith worketh Patience. Jam.* 1. 3. For therefore doth the Christian resigne up himself, and all that concerns him, his triall, the measure and length of them all, unto Gods dispose, because he knowes that he is in the hands of a wise and loving Father. Thus the trial of those, and other particular Gracts, doe still resolve into this, and are compris'd under it, the triall of Faith.

This tryal (as that of Gold) may be for a twofold end. 1. for Experiment of the truth, and pureness of a Christians faith. 2. for refining it yet more; and to raise it to a highet pitch or degree of pureness.

1. The furnace of Affliction shows upright real Faith to be such indeed, remaining still the same even in the fire, the same that it was, undiminished; as good Gold loses none of its quantity in the fire. Doubtless many are deceiv'd in time of ease and prosperity with imaginary Faith, and Fortitude: so that there may be still some doubt while a Man is under-

set

ſet with outward helps, as Riches, Friends, Eſteem &c. whether he leanes upon thoſe, or upon God who is an Inviſible ſupport though ſtronger then all that are viſible, and is the peculiar, and alone ſtay of Faith in all Conditions. But when all theſe outward props are pluckt away from a Man, then it will manifeſt, whether ſomething elſe upholds him or not; for if there be nothing elſe then he falls, but if his mind ſtand firm and unremoved as before; then 'tis evident he laid not his weight upon theſe things he had them about him but was built upon a foundation though not ſeen, which is able alone to ſtay him although he be not only fruſtrated of all other ſupports, but beaten upon with ſtormes and tempeſts, as our Saviour ſayes, *the houſe fell not becauſe it was founded upon a rock. Mat. 7. 25.*

This teſtified the truth of *Davids* Faith, who found it ſtaying him upon God, when there was nothing elſe near that could do't. *I had fainted unleſs, I had believ'd. Pſa. 27. 13.* So in his ſtrait. *1. Sam. 30. 6.* Where its ſaid, that *David was greatly diſtreſſed: but he encouraged himſelf in the Lord his God.* Thus *Pſa. 73. 26. My fleſh and my heart faileth: but God is the ſtrength of my heart and portion for ever.* The Hearts naturall ſtrength of ſpirit and Reſolution may bear up under outward weakneſs, or the failing of the fleſh: but when the Heart it ſelf fails, that is the ſtrength of the fleſh, what ſhall ſtrengthen it? nothing but God; *who is the ſtrength of the heart and its portion for ever.* Thus Faith worketh alone, when the Caſe ſuites that of the Prophets *Habak. 2. 17. Although the fig tree ſhall not Bloſſom neither ſhall fruit be in the vine &c. yet verſ. 18. I will re-*

joyce in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my ſalvation.

In ſpirituall tryalls that are the ſharpeſt and fieryeſt of all, when the furnace is within a Man, when God doth not onely ſhut up his loveing kindneſs from its feeling; but ſeems to ſhut it up in hot diſpleaſure, when he writes bitter things againſt it, yet then to depend upon Him, and wait for his ſalvation, this is not onely a true, but a ſtrong, and very refined Faith indeed, and the more he ſmites, the more to cleave to him; well might he ſay *when I am tried I ſhall come forth as Gold*, who could ſay that word, *though he ſlay me yet will I truſt in him*; though I ſaw (as it were) his hand lifted up to deſtroy me, yet from that ſame hand would I expect ſalvation.

As the furnace ſhews faith to be what it is, ſo alſo it betters it, and makes it more precious and purer then it was.

The Graces of the ſpirit as they come from the hand of God that infuſes them are nothing but pureneſs: but being put into a heart where ſin dwells, (which till the body be diſſolved and taken to pieces, cannot be fully purg'd out) there they are mixed with Corruption and droſs. And particularly Faith is mixed with Unbelief, and Love of earthly things, and dependance upon the Creature, if not more then God, yet together with him, and for this, is the furnace needfull, that the ſoul may be purified from this droſs, and made more ſublime and ſpirituall in believing. Tis a hard talk and many times comes but ſlowly forward to teach the heart by diſcourſe and ſpeculation to ſit looſe from the world at all ſides, not to cleave to the beſt things in it, though we be compaſſ'd about with them, though Riches do increaſe

creaſe, yet not to ſet our hearts on them, not to truſt in ſuch uncertain things as they are, as the Apoſtle ſpeaks. Therefore God is pleaſ'd to chuſe the more effectual way to teach his own the right and pure exerciſe of Faith, either by witholding, or withdrawing thoſe things from them, makes them reliſh the ſweetneſs of ſpirituall Comfort, by depriving them of thoſe outward Comforts wherein they were in moſt danger of exceſs to have doted on them, and ſo forget themſelves and him; when they are neceſſitate, and experimentally train'd up eaſily to let go their hold of any thing Earthly, and to ſtay themſelves onely upon their Rock, this is the very refining of their faith, by thoſe loſſes and afflictions wherewith they are exerciſed; they that learn bodily Exerciſes, as fencing *&c.* Are not taught by ſitting ſtill, and hearing Rules, or ſeeing others practiſe, but they learn by exerciſing themſelves. The way to profit in the art of believing or comeing to this ſpirituall activity of faith, is, to be often put to that work, in the difficulteſt way, to make up all wants and loſſes in God, and to ſweeten the bittereſt griefs with his loving kindneſs.

Might be found unto praiſe and honour and glory] This is the end that is intended, and ſhall be certainly obtain'd, by all theſe hot trials. Faith ſhall come through them all and *ſhall be found unto praiſe. &c.* An unſkillfull beholder may think ſtrange to ſee Gold thrown into the fire, and left there for a time, but he that puts it there would be loath to loſe it, his purpoſe is to make ſome coſtly piece of work of it,; every believer gives himſelf to Chriſt, and he undertakes to preſent them blameleſs to the

Father, not one of them ſhall be loſt, nor one dram of their faith, they ſhall be found, and their Faith ſhall be found when he appears. That faith that is here in the furnace ſhall be then made up into a Crown of pure Gold, *it ſhall be found unto praiſe and honour and Glory.*

This Praiſe, and Honour, and Glory may be referr'd to believers themſelves according to the Apoſtle S. *Pauls* Expreſſion *Rom.* 2. 7. or to Chriſt that appears: but the two will agree well together, that it be both to their Praiſe, and to the Praiſe of Chriſt; for certainly all their praiſe and glory, ſhall terminate in the Glory of their Head Chriſt, who is God bleſſed for ever, they have each their Crown, but their Honour is, to caſt them all down before his Throne. *He ſhall be glorified in his Saints and admired in them that believe.* They ſhall be glorious in Him, and therefore in all their glory he ſhall be glorified, for as they have derived their glory from him, it ſhall all return back to him again.

At the appearance of Jeſus Chriſt] This denotes the Time when this ſhall come to paſs. For Chriſt is faithfull and true, he hath promiſed to come again, and to Judge the World in Righteouſneſs, and he will come, and will not tarry, he ſhall Judge Righteouſly, in that day, that was himſelf unrighteouſly judged here on Earth. Tis called the *Revelation*; all other things ſhall be Revealed in that day, the moſt hidden things, good and evil unvail'd, but 'tis eminently the day of *His Revelation*, it ſhall be by his Light, by the brightneſs of his coming that all other things ſhall be reveal'd but he himſelf ſhall be the worthieſt ſight of all: All eyes ſhall behold Him. He ſhall then glorioufly appear be-

fore

fore all Men, and Angels, and ſhall by all be acknowledged to be the ſon of God, and Judge of the World, ſome ſhall with joy know him, and acknowledge him to be ſo, others to their Horrour, and amazement. How beautifull ſhall he be to thoſe that Love him; when he as the glorious Head ſhall appear with his whole body myſticall together with him?

Then the Glory and Praiſe that all the Saints ſhall be honoured with, ſhall recompenſe fully all the Scorns and Ignominies, and Diſtreſſes they have met with here. And they ſhall ſhine the brighter for them, Oh! if we Conſider'd often of that ſolemn day, how light would we ſet by the opinions of Men, and all outward hardſhips that can befall us, digeſt diſpraiſe and diſhonour here, and paſs through all cheerfully, providing we may be then found in him, and ſo partakers of *Praiſe, and Glory, and Honour in that day of his appearing.*

Verſes. 8, 9.

8. *Whom haveing not ſeen, yee Love; in whom tho you ſee him not, yet believing ye rejoyce, with joy unſpeakable and full of Glory.*

9. *Receiveing the End of your faith even the Salvation of your Souls.*

IT is a paradox to the world that the Apoſtle hath aſſerted, that there is a Joy that can ſubſiſt in the midſt of ſorrow; therefore he inſiſts in the Con-

firmation

firmation of it, And in all those words proves it to the full, yea, with advantage, that the Saints have not only some measure of Joy in the griefs that abound upon them here, but excellent and eminent Joy, such as makes good all that can be said of it, cannot be spoke too much of, for 'tis *Unspeakable*, nor too much magnified for it is *Glorious*.

To Evidence the truth of this, and to confirme his Brethren in the experienc'd knowledge of it, he expresses here more particularly, and distinctly the causes of this their Joy which are.

1. The *Object* or *Matter* of it. 2. The *Apprehension* and *appropriation* of that *Object*, which two conjoyn'd are the entire cause of all Rejoyceing.

The *Object* is Jesus Christ, *verse* 8. And the Salvation purchased by him *verse* 9. For these two cannot be sever'd, and these two Verses that speak of them, require (as is evident by their connexion) to be considered together 2. The apprehension of these, 1. set forth negatively, not by bodily sight. 2. Positively, whereas that might seem to abate the certainty and liveliness of their Rejoyceing that 'tis of things they had not seen, nor do yet see, that is abundantly made up by three for one, each of them more excellent then the meer bodily sight of Christ in the flesh, which many had, which were never the better by't: the three are, those three prime Christian Graces, Faith, Love, and Hope: The two former in *ver.* 8. the 3*d.* in *ver.* 9. Faith in Christ begetting Love to him, and both these giving assured Hope of salvation by him, making it as certian to them, as if it were already in their hand, and they in possession of it. And from all those together results this Exultation

tion, or leaping for joy, *Joy unſpeakable and full of Glory.*

This is that one *thing* that ſo much concerns us: and therefore we miſtake very far, and forget our own higheſt intereſt too much when we either ſpeak or hear of it ſlightly, and apply not our hearts to it. What is it that all our thoughts and endeavours drive at? What means all that we are doing in the World, tho we take ſeveral wayes to it, and wrong wayes for the moſt part, yea ſuch wayes as lead not to it, but ſet us further off from it, yet that which we all ſeek after by all our labour under the Sun, is ſomething that may be matter of Contentment, and rejoycing to us when we have attain'd it, now here it is, and in vain is it ſought for elſewhere. And for this end 'tis repreſented to you, that it may be yours, if ye will entertain it: not only that you may know this to be a truth, that in Jeſus Chriſt is laid up true Conſolation and Rejoyceing, that he is the Magazine and Treaſury of it, but that you may know how to bring him home into your hearts and lodge him there, and ſo to have the ſpring of Joy within you.

That which gives full joy to the Soul muſt be ſomething that is higher and better then it ſelf, in a word, he that made it, can only make it glad after this manner, with *unſpeakable and glorious joy*, but the Soul remaining guilty of Rebellion againſt him, and unreconcil'd, cannot behold him, but as an Enemy, any belief that it can have of him while 'tis in that poſture, is not ſuch as can fetch *Love*, and *Hope*, and ſo *Rejoycing*: but ſuch as the Faith of devils produceth, only begetting terrour and trem-

bling, but the light of his Countenance shining in the face of his Son the Mediator, glads the heart: and 'tis the looking upon him so, that causeth the soul to *Believe*, and *Love*, and *Hope*, and *Rejoyce*. Therefore the Apostle, *Eph.* 2. In his description of the estate of the Gentiles before Christ was preach'd to them, joynes these together, *without Christ*, that was the cause of all the rest; therefore without comfort in the Promises, *without Hope and without God in the world*; So he is here by our Apostle expresst, as the object. In all these therefore he is the matter of our joy, because our *Faith*, and *Love*, and *Hope of Salvation*.

The Apostle writing to the dispersed Jewes many of whom had not known nor seen Christ in the flesh, commends their Love and Faith, for this reason, that it did not depend upon bodily sight; but was pure, and spiritual, and made them of the number of those, that our Saviour himselfe pronounces *blessed*, *who have not seen and yet believe*. You saw him not when he dwelt amongst Men, and walked to and fro Preaching, and working Miracles, Many of those that did then hear and see him believed not, yea they scoff'd, and hated, and persecuted him, and in the end Crucified him, you that have seen none of all those things yet having heard the Gospel that declares him, *you have believed*.

Thus *Observe*, the working, or not working of Faith, doth not depend upon the difference of the external Ministry and gifts of Men: for what greater difference can there be that way, than betwixt the Master, and the Servants, betwixt the great Prophet himself, and his weak sinful Messengers, and yet many

many of those that saw, and heard him in Person, were not converted, believ'd not in him, and thousands that never saw him, were converted by his Apostles, and as it seems, even some of those that were some way accessory to his death, yet were brought to Repentance by this same Apostles Sermon. *Act.* 2.

Learn then to look above the outward Ministry and any difference that in Gods dispensation can be there, and know, that if Jesus Christ himself were on Earth, and now Preaching amongst us, yet might his incomparable words be unprofitable to us, not being mix'd with faith in the hearers. But where that is, the meanest despisable conveyance of his Message received with humility, and affection will work blessed Effects.

Whom not seeing, yet believeing.] Faith elevates the Soul not only above sense, and sensible things; but above Reason it selfe, as reason corrects the Errours that sense might occasion; So supernatural Faith corrects the Errours of natural Reason, judging according to Sense.

The Sun seems less then the wheel of a Chariot: but Reason teaches the Philosopher, that 'tis much bigger then the whole Earth, and the cause why it seems so little is, its great distance.

The Naturally wise man, is as far deceiv'd by this carnal Reason in his estimate of Jesus Christ the Sun of Righteousness, and the cause is the same, his great distance from him, as the *Psalmist* speaks of the wicked. *Psal.* 10. 5. *Thy Judgements are far above out of his sight.* He accounts Christ, and his Glory a smaller matter then his own Gain, Honour, or Pleasure

for these are near him, and he sees their quantity to the full, and counts them bigger, yea far more worth then they are indeed, but the Apostle St. *Paul* and all they that are enlightened by the same Spirit, they know by Faith, which is divine Reason, that the Excellency of Jesus Christ far surpasses the worth of the whole Earth, and all things earthly. *Phil.* 3. 7. 8.

To give a right assent to the Gospel of Christ is Impossible, without divine and saving Faith infused in the Soul, to believe that the Eternal Son of God cloath'd himselfe with humane flesh, and dwelt amongst Men in a Tabernacle like theirs, and suffered death in the flesh, that he who was Lord of Life, hath [illegible]ed us from the sentence of Eternal Death, that he broke the bars and chains of Death, and rose again, that he went up into Heaven, and there at the Fathers right hand sits in our flesh, and that glorified above the Angels. This is the great Mistery of Godliness. And a part of this Mistery is, that *he is Believed on in the world.* 1 *Tim.* 3. 16. This Natural Men may discourse of, and that very knowingly, and give a kind of natural Credit to't, as to a History that may be true; but firmly to believe, that there is *divine Truth* in all these things, and to have a perswasion of it stronger then of the very things we see with our eyes, such an assent as this, is the peculiar work of the spirit of God, and is certainly saving Faith.

The Soul that so believes, cannot chuse but Love, 'tis commonly true, the Eye is the ordinary door by which Love enters into the Soul, and it is true in this Love, though tis denied of the Eye of sense yet

yet (you ſee) 'tis aſcrib'd to the Eye of Faith. *though you have not ſeen him you Love him, becauſe you believe.* Which is to ſee him ſpiritually, Faith indeed is diſtinguiſh'd from that Viſion that is in Glory: but it is the Viſion of the Kingdom of Grace, 'tis the Eye of the New Creature, that quick-ſighted Eye, that pierces all the Viſible Heavens, and ſees above them, that looks to things that are not ſeen. 2 *Cor.* 4. 18. And *is the evidence of things not ſeen Heb.* 11. 1. that *ſees him that is inviſible, v.* 27. 'Tis poſſible that one may be much Lov'd upon the report of their worth, and Vertues, and upon a Picture of them livly drawn before ſight of the party ſo commended, and repreſented, but certainly when they are ſeen, and found anſwerable to the former, it raiſes the Affection that it firſt begun, to a far greater height. We have the report of the perfections of Jeſus Chriſt in the Goſpel, yea, ſo clear a deſcription of him, that it gives a picture of him, and that together with the Sacraments, are the only lawful, and the only lively pictures of our Saviour. *Gal.* 3. 1. Now this Report Faith believes and beholds this picture, and ſo lets in the Love of Chriſt to the Soul: but further it gives a particular experimental knowledge of Chriſt, and acquaintance with him. It cauſes the Soul find all that is ſpoken of him in the Word, and his beauty there repreſented, to be abundantly true, makes it really taſte of his ſweetneſs, and by that poſſeſſes the heart more ſtrongly with his Love, perſwading it of the truth of thoſe things, not by reaſons, and arguments; but by an Inexpreſſible kind of Evidence, that they only know that have it. Faith perſwades a Chriſtian of theſe two things,

that the *Philosopher* gives as the causes of all Love. *Beauty*, and *Propriety*, the Loveliness of Christ in himself, and our interest in him.

The former it effectuates not only by the first apprehending, and believing of those his Excellencies and Beauty, but by frequent beholding of him, and Eyeing him in whom all Perfection dwells, and looks to oft on him, till it sets the very Impression of his Image (as it were) upon the Soul that it can never be blotted out, and forgot. The latter it doth by that particular Uniting Act, which makes him our God and our Saviour.

Ye Love] The distinctions that some make of *Love*, need not be taken as of differing kinds, but different actings of the same Love, by which we may try our so much pretended Love of Christ, which in truth is so rarely found. There will then be in this Love, if it be right, these three qualities, *Goodwill*, *Delight*, and *Desire*.

1. *Goodwill*, earnest wishing, and (as we can) promoting Gods Glory, and stirring up others so to do. They that seek more their own things then the things of Jesus Christ, more their own Praise, and Esteem then His, are strangers to this divine Love. For *it seeks not her own things*. This bitter Root of self-love, is most hard to pluck up: this strongest and sweetest Love of Christ alone doth it actually, though gradually. This Love makes the Soul as the lower Heaven, flow in its own motion, most swift in the motion of that first that wheels it about: for the higher degree of Love, the more swift. It Loves the hardest tasks, And greatest difficulties, where it may perform God service, either in doing, or

in

in ſuffering for him. *It is ſtrong as death, and many waters cannot quench it.* The greater the task is, the more real is the teſtimony, and expreſſion of Love, and therefore the more acceptable to God.

2. There is in true Love, a complacency, and delight in God. A Conformity to his will, Loving what he Loves, and ſtudious of his will, ever ſeeking to know more clearly, what it is that is moſt pleaſing to him, contracting a likeneſs to God in all his actions, by converſing with him, frequent contemplating of God, and looking on his beauty, as the Eye lets in this Affection, ſo it ſerves it conſtantly, and readily looks that way that Love directs it, thus the ſoul that is poſſeſſ'd with this Love of Jeſus Chriſt hath its eye much upon him, thinks often on his former ſufferings, and preſent Glory, the more it lookes upon Chriſt, the more it loves, and ſtill the more it loves, the more it delights to look upon him.

3. There is in true Love a Deſire, for 'tis but ſmall beginnings, and taſtes of his Goodneſs that the ſoul hath here, therefore 'tis ſtill looking out and longing for the day of Marriage, the time is ſad and wearisome, and ſeems much longer then it is, while 'tis detein'd here. *I deſire to be diſſolved* (ſaith St. *Paul*) *and to be with Chriſt.*

God is the Sum of all things lovely, thus excellently *Greg. Nazian* expreſſeth himſelf *Orat.* 1. 'If 'I have any Poſſeſſions, Health, Credit, Learn-'ing this is all the contentment I have of them, that 'I have ſomewhat, I may deſpiſe for Chriſt, who 'is *totus deſiderabilis, & totum deſiderabile.* And this

this Love is the ſum of all he requires of us, 'tis that which makes all our meaneſt Services acceptable, and without which, all we offer to him is diſtaſteful. God doth not only deſerve our Love by his matchleſs Excellency, and Beauty: but by his Matchleſs Love to us, and that is the ſtrongeſt Loadſtone of Love, *He hath loved me*, ſaith the Apoſtle, *Gal.* 2. 20. How appears that? in no leſs then this, *he hath given himſelf for me.* Certainly then, there is no other Character of our Love then this, to give our ſelves to him, that hath ſo loved us, and given himſelf for us.

This affection muſt be beſtowed ſomewhere, there is no Man but hath ſome prime choyce, ſomewhat that is the predominant delight of his ſoul, will it not then be our wiſdom to make the worthieſt choyce? ſeeing it is offered us, and is extream folly to reject it.

Grace doth not pluck up by the roots and wholly deſtroy the natural paſſions of the mind, becauſe they are diſtempered by ſin: that were an extreme remedy, to Cure by killing, and heal by cutting off, no, but it corrects the diſtemper in them, it dries not up this main ſtream of Love, but purifies it from the Mud it is full of in its wrong Courſe, or calls it to its Right Channel by which it may run into Happineſs, and empty it ſelfe into the Ocean of goodneſs. The Holy Spirit turns the love of the ſoul towards God in Chriſt; for in that way only can it apprehend his Love; ſo then Jeſus Chriſt is the firſt *Object* of this divine Love, he is *Medium unionis*, through whom God conveys the ſenſe of his Love to the ſoul, and receives back its Love to him.

And

And if we will consider his incomparable Beauty, we may look on it in the holy Scriptures, particularly in that divine song of Loves, Wherein *Solomon* borrowes all the beauties of the Creatures, dips his pencill in all their severall Excellencies, to set him forth unto us, who is the chief of ten Thousands. There is an inseparable intermixture of Love with Belief, and a pious Affection, receiving divine Truth, so that in effect, as we distinguish them, they are mutually strengthened the one by the other, and so though it seem a Circle, 'tis a divine one, and falls not under censure of the School's Pedantry. If you ask how shall I do to *Love*? I Answer, *Believe*. If you ask how shall I believe? I Answer, *Love*. Although the Expressions to a carnall mind are altogether unsavoury, by gross mistaking them, yet to a Soul taught to Read and Hear them by any measure of that same Spirit of love, wherewith they were penn'd, they are full of heavenly and unutterable sweetness.

Many Directions, and means of begetting and increasing this Love of Christ may be here offered; but they that delight in number may multiply them, but sure this One, will Comprehend the greatest, and best part, if not all of them, *Believe, and you shall Love; Believe much, and you shall Love much*; labour for strong, and deep persuasions of the glorious things that are spoken of Christ, and this will command Love. Certainly did Men indeed believe his worth they would accordingly Love him; for the Reasonable Creature, cannot but affect that most, which it firmly believes to be worthy of affection. O this mischief of Unbelief, is that which makes the heart

cold, and dead towards God. Seek then to believe Christs Excellency in himselfe, and his Love to us, and our interest in him, and this will kindle such a fire in the heart, as will make it ascend in a Sacrifice of Love to him.

Many Signes likewise of this Love may be multiplied, according to the many fruits, and workings of it: but in them all, it self is its own most infallible Evidence. When the soul finds that all its Obedience, and endeavour to keep the Commands of Jesus Christ, which himself makes its Character, do flow from Love, then it is true and sincere: For do, or suffer what you will, without Love, all passes for nothing. All are Cyphers without it, they signifie nothing. 1. *Cor.* 13.

This is the Message of the Gospell, and that which the Ministry aimes at, and therefore the Ministers ought to be Suitors, not for themselves, but for Christ to Espouse souls to him, and to bring in many hearts to Love him. And certainly this is the most compendious way to perswade to all other Christian duties, this is to converse with Jesus Christ; and therefore where his Love is, no other incentive will be needfull. For Love delights in the presence and converse of the party Loved. If we are to perswade to duties of the second Table, the summe of those is Love to our Brethren resulting from the Love of Christ, which diffuseth such a sweetness into the soul that its all Love, and meekness, and Gentleness and long suffering.

If times be for suffering, Love will make the soul not onely bear, but welcome the bitterest afflictions of life, and the hardest kinds of death for his sake.

In

In a word, there is in Love a ſweet conſtraint, or tying of the heart to all Obedience, and Duty.

The Love of God is requiſite in Miniſters, for their preaching of the word, ſo our Saviour to St. *Peter*, *John*, 21. 15. *Peter loveſt thou me? then feed my lambs.* It is requiſite for the people that they receive the Truth in the Love of it, and that Chriſt preach'd be Entertain'd in the ſoul, and Embrac'd by Faith, and Love.

You that have made choyce of Chriſt for your Love, let not your hearts ſlip out, to renew your wonted baſe familiarity with Sin. For that will bring new bitterneſs to your ſouls and at leaſt for ſome time will deprive you of the ſenſible favour of your beloved Jeſus, delight alwayes in God, and give him your whole heart; for he deſerves it all, and is a ſatisfying good to it, the largeſt heart is all of it too ſtrait for the riches of conſolation that he brings with him, ſeek to Increaſe in this Love; for tho' its at firſt weak, yet Labour to find it daily riſe higher, and burn hotter, and clearer, and conſume the droſs of Earthly deſires.

Receiving the end of your Faith.] Although the ſoul that Believes, and Loves, is put in preſent poſſeſſion of God, as far as it is Capable, in its ſojourning here: yet it deſires a full Enjoyment; which it cannot attain to, without Removing hence. *while we are preſent in the body, we are abſent from the Lord*, ſaith the Apoſtle. And becauſe they are aſſur'd of that happy Exchange, that being unitedly and freed of this body, they ſhall be preſent with the Lord, and that having his own word for't, that *Where he is, they ſhall be alſo*: this begets ſuch an aſſured

Hope, as bears the name of poſſeſſion. Therefore its ſaid here *Receiveing the end of your faith.*

This *Receiveing* likewiſe flows from Faith. Faith apprehends the preſent Truth of the divine Promiſes, and ſo makes the things to come, preſent; and Hope looks out to their after Accompliſhment, which if the promiſes be true, as Faith averrs, then Hope hath good reaſon firmly to expect it. This deſire, and Hope are the very wheels of the Soul that carry it on, and Faith the common Axis on which they reſt.

In the words there are two things. 1. The good hoped for in Chriſt, ſo Relieved on, and Loved. 2. The aſſuredneſs of the Hope it ſelfe, yea as ſure as if it were already accompliſhed. As for the good hoped for it conſiſts. 1. In the nature of it *Viz.* The *Salvation of their Soul.* 2. in a Relative Property of it, *the End of their Faith.*

The nature of it is, *Salvation, and Salvation of the ſoul,* it imports full deliverance from all kind of miſery, and the ſafe poſſeſſion of perfect happineſs, when the ſoul ſhall be out of the reach of all Adverſaries, and adverſe Accidents, no more ſubjected to thoſe Evils that are its own properly, namely the Conſcience of Sin, and fear of Wrath, and ſad Defections, nor yet ſubject to thoſe other Evils it endur'd by Society with the body, outward diſtreſſes, and Affliction, Perſecutions, Poverty, diſeaſes &c.

'Tis call'd *Salvation of the ſoul,* not excluding the body from the ſociety of that Glory, when it ſhall be raiſ'd and reunited to the Soul: but becauſe the ſoul is of it ſelf an Immortall ſubſtance, and both the more Noble part of Man, and the prime ſub-

ject

ject both of Grace and glory, and because it arrives first at that blessedness, and for a time leaves the body in the dust to do homage to its Originall; therefore it is only named here: but Jesus is the Saviour of the body too, and he shall at his coming, *change our vile bodies, and make them like his glorious body.*

The End,] End, or Reward, for it is both. Its the *End*, either at which Faith aimes, or wherein it Ceaseth; its the *Reward*, not of their Works, nor of Faith, as a work deserving it, but as the Condition of the New Covenant, which God according to the tenour of that Covenant first works in his own, and then Rewards, as if it were their work. And this Salvation, or Fruition of Christ, is the proper Reward of faith, which Believes in him unseen, and so obtains that happy sight. 'tis the proper work of faith to believe what thou seest not, and the Reward of faith, to see what thou hast believed.

This is the Certainty of their Hope, that 'tis as if they had already receiv'd it, if the promise of God, and the merit of Christ hold good; then they that believe in him, and Love him, are made sure to salvation. The promises of God in Christ are not *yea* and *nay*: but they are in him *yea*, and in him *Amen*; sooner may the Rivers run back-ward, and the course of the Heavens change, and the frame of nature be dissolv'd, then any one soul that is united to Jesus Christ by Faith and Love can be sever'd from him, And so fall short of salvation hoped for in him; and this is the matter of their rejoycing.

Te Rejoyce with Joy unspeakable.] *The naturall Man* (sayes the Apostle) *receiveth not things of*

God, for they are fooliſhneſs unto him, and he adds the Reaſon why he cannot know them, *for they are ſpiritually diſcern'd*, he hath none of that faculty by which they are diſcern'd, there is a vaſt diſproportion betwixt thoſe things, and Natures higheſt Capacity, it cannot work beyond its Sphere. Speak to the Naturall Man of the matter of Spirituall grief, the ſenſe of Guiltineſs, and the Apprehenſion of Gods diſpleaſure, or the hiding of his favour, and the Light of his countenance from the ſoul, theſe things ſtirre not him, he knows not what they mean; Speak to him again of the Peace of Conſcience, and ſenſe of Gods Love, and the Joy that ariſes hence, He is no leſs ſtranger to that: As our Saviour ſpeaks, *mourn to him* and *he laments not*, *pipe to him and he dances not*, *Mat.* 11. but as it there follows, there is a wiſdom in thoſe things though they ſeem Folly, and Non-ſenſe to the fooliſh world, and *this wiſdome is juſtified of her own Children.*

Having ſaid ſomewhat allready of the Cauſes of this ſpirituall Joy, the Apoſtle ſpeaks of here. It remains now, that we conſider thoſe two things 1. How Joy ariſeth from thoſe Cauſes. 2. the Excellency of this Joy as 'tis here expreſſ'd.

There is here a ſollid ſufficient Good, and the heart made ſure of it, being partly put in preſent poſſeſſion of it, and in a moſt certain Hope of all the reſt. And what can be more required to make it joyfull? Jeſus Chriſt the treaſure of all bleſſings received, and united to the ſoul by Faith and Love and Hope.

Is not Chriſt the Light and Joy of the Nations? ſuch a light as *Abraham* at the diſtance of many ages, of more then two thouſand years, yet ſaw by faith,

faith, and ſeeing Rejoyced. Beſides this brightneſs that makes, light a joyfull object, Light is often in Scripture put for Joy. Chriſt this Light brings Salvation with him, He is the *Sun of Righteouſneſs*, and there is *healing under his wings*. I bring you, ſaid the Angel, *good tydings of great Joy, that ſhall be to all people*. And their Song hath in it the matter of that Joy, *Glory to God in the Higheſt, peace on Earth, and good will toward Men*.

But to the end we may Rejoyce in Chriſt, we muſt find him ours, otherwiſe the more Excellent he is, the more Cauſe hath the heart to be ſad, while it hath no portion in him: *my ſpirit hath Rejoyced* (ſaith the Bleſſed Virgin) *in God my Saviour*.

Thus 1. *Joh.* 1. 3. Having ſpoken of our Communion with Chriſt, he adds *theſe things I write that your Joy may be full*. Faith worketh this Joy by uniteing the Soul to Chriſt, and applying his merites, and from that application ariſes the pardon of ſin, and ſo that load of miſery which was the great Cauſe of Sorrow, is removed, and ſo ſoon as the Soul finds it ſelfe lightned, and unloaded of that burden that was ſinking it to Hell, it cannot chuſe but leap for Joy in the Eaſe, and Refreſhment it finds. Therefore that Pſalm that *David* begins with the doctrine of the Pardon of Sin, he Ends it with an Exhortation to *Rejoyceing*. *Bleſſed is the Man whoſe tranſgreſſion is forgiven whoſe ſin is covered*. *Pſal.* 32. 1. Thus he begins, but he ends *verſ.* 11. *Be glad in the Lord, and Rejoyce ye Righteous, and ſhout for joy all ye that are upright in heart*. S. *Peter* ſpeaks to his hearers of the Remiſſion of ſins. *Act.* 2. 38. and *verſe* 41. 'tis added, *they received his words galdy*,

Gladly, and our Saviour joynes theſe two together, *be of good Comfort thy ſins are forgiven thee*; Thus *Iſaiah*, 61. 1. Good tidings of Liberty to Captives is proclaimed, and a notable change there is of their Eſtate *Who mourn in Zion, Giving them beauty for aſhes, the Oyle of joy for mourning, and the garment of praiſe for the Spirit of Heavineſs.* Think with what Joy the long impriſon'd debter drown'd in debt receives a full Diſcharge, and his Liberty; or a condemned Malefactor the news of his Pardon, and this will ſomewhat reſemble it; but yet fall far ſhort of the joy that Faith brings, by bringing Chriſt to the Soul, and ſo forgiveneſs of ſins in him.

But this is not all. This Believing Soul, is not only a debter acquitted, and ſet free, but Enrich'd beſides, with a new and great Eſtate, not onely a pardon'd Malefactor, but withall highly preferr'd and advanc'd to honour, having a Right by the promiſes *to the unſearchable Riches of Chriſt*, as the Apoſtle ſpeaks, and is receiv'd into favour with God, and unto the Dignity of Sonſhip, taken from the dunghill, and ſet with Princes.

As there is Joy from Faith, ſo alſo from Love. Though 'tis in it ſelf the moſt ſweet and delightfull paſſion of the Soul, yet as we fooliſhly miſplace it, it prove often full of bitterneſs, but being ſet upon Jeſus Chriſt the only right, and worthy *Object*, it Cauſeth this unſpeakable Delight and Rejoycing.

1. Tis matter of joy to have beſtowed our Love ſo worthily, and though our Saviour ſeems to withdraw himſelfe, and ſometimes ſadden the ſoul that loves him, with abſences, in regard of ſenſe, yet even in thoſe ſad times, the ſoul delights to Love him, and there

there is a pleasure in the very pains it hath in seeking after him. And this it knowes that his mercies are Everlasting, and that he cannot be long unkind; but will return and speak comfortably unto it.

2. Our Love to Christ gives us assurance of His to us. so that we have not only chosen worthily, but shall not be frustrate and disappointed, and it assures us of his, not as following, but preceeding and Causing ours: for our Love to Jesus Christ is no other but the reflex of his on us. *Wine maketh glad the heart*; but *thy love is better then Wine*, saith the Spouse. And having this perswasion that he hath loved us, and wash'd us in his blood, and forgets us not in our conflicts: that though he himself is in his Glory, yet that he interceed's for us there, and will bring us thither, what condition can befal us so hard, but we may Rejoyce in it? And in them so far as we are sure to arrive at that full Salvation, and fruition of him who hath purchas'd it, Then there is the third Cause of our Rejoyceing *viz.* our Hope.

Now *Hope* is our *anchor pitch'd within the vail*, that stayes us against all the stormes that beat upon us in this troublesome Sea, that we are tossed upon. The Soul that strongly Believes, and Loves, may confidently Hope to see what it believeth, and Enjoy what it loves, and in that rejoyce. It may say whatsoever hazards whether ontward, or inward, whatsoever Afflictions and Temptations I endure, yet this one thing puts me out of hazard, and in that I will Rejoyce, the salvation of my Soul depends not upon my own strength, but is in my Saviours hand, *my life is hid with Christ in God, and*

When he who is my Life shall appear, I likewise shall appear with him in Glory. The Childish world is hunting shadows, and gaping and hoping after they know not what, but the Believer can say, I know whom I have trusted, and am perswaded that *he is able to keep that which I have committed to him against that day.* Now we have not only right to those things; but withal there must be frequent Consideration of them to work Joy. The Soul must often view them, and so Rejoyce: *My meditation of him shall be sweet,* saith *David, I will be glad in the Lord,* Psal. 104. And the Godly failing in this, deprive themselves much of that Joy they might have, and they that are most in these sublime thoughts, have the highest and truest Joy.

The Excellency of this Joy the Apostle here expresseth by these two words, *Unspeakable,* and *full of glory.*

That 'tis *Unspeakable,* no wonder, seeing the matter of it is Inconceivable, it is an Infinite Good. God reconciled in Jesus Christ, and testifying, and sealing his Love unto the soul, and giving assured hope of that blessed Vision of Eternity, what more unspeakable than this? And for the same Reason 'tis *Glorious,* or glorified joy, having the highest and most glorious Object, for it derives all its Excellency from thence.

Unspeakable.] The best worldly Joyes are easily speakable, they may be exprest to the utmost, yea usually more is spoke of them then they are indeed. Their name is beyond their worth, they are very seldom found upon experience equal to the opinion and expectation that men have

of

of them. But this ſpiritual Joy is above the report any can make of it, ſay what they can of it who are of happieſt Expreſſion, yet when a Man comes to know it in his own breaſt, he will ſay (as that Queen ſaid of *Salomons* wiſdom) *the half was not told me of it.*

Again earthly Joyes are Inglorious. Many of which, Men are aſham'd of, and thoſe that ſeem moſt plauſible, yet are below the Excellency of the Soul, and cannot fill it, but the Joyes that ariſe from Union with Chriſt, as they are moſt avowable, a Man needs not bluſh to own them, ſo they are truly contenting, and ſatisfying, and thats their Glory, and the Cauſe why we may glory in them; *My ſoul ſhall make her boaſt in God*, ſayes *David.*

For *Application* of all this. If theſe things were believed we would hearken no more to the fooliſh prejudice that the World hath taken up againſt Religion, and wherewith Satan endeavours to poſſeſs mens hearts, that they may be ſcarr'd from the wayes of Holineſs, 'tis, that they think it a Sour Melancoly life, that hath nothing but Sadneſs and Mourning in it, but to remove this prejudice.

Conſider, 1. Religion barres not the lawful delights that are taken in natural things, but teaches the moderate, and regular uſe of them, which is far the ſweeter, for things lawful in themſelves, are in their exceſs ſinful, and ſo prove Bitterneſs in the end, and if in ſome caſes it require the forſaking of lawful Enjoyments as of pleaſure, or Profits, or Honour, for God and for his Glory, this is Generous, and truly more delightful to deny them for this reaſon, then to enjoy them. Men have done much

this way for the Love of their Country, and by a Principle of Moral Vertue, but to loſe any delight or to ſuffer any hardſhip for that higheſt End, the glory of God, and by the ſtrength of love to him, is far more Excellent, and truly Pleaſant.

2. The delights and pleaſures of ſin, Religion indeed baniſhes, but 'tis to change them for this Joy that is unſpeakably beyond them, it calls men from ſordid and baſe delights, to thoſe that are pure delights indeed, it calls to Men, drink ye no longer of the pudle, here are the Cryſtal ſtreams of a living fountain. There is a delight in the very deſpiſing impure delights, as he ſaid, *how pleaſant is it to want theſe pleaſures.* But for ſuch a change, to have in their ſtead ſuch delights, as in compariſon, the other deſerve not that name, To have ſuch ſpiritual joy, as ſhall end in Eternal Joy, 'tis a wonder we haſten not all to chuſe this joy; but 'tis indeed becauſe we believe it not.

Quam ſuave eſt iſtis ſuavitatibus carere Aug.

3. 'Tis true the Godly are ſubject to great Diſtreſſes, and Afflictions; but their Joy is not extinguiſhed by thoſe, no nor diminiſhed either: but often ſenſibly increaſ'd. When they have leaſt of the Worlds joy, they abound moſt in Spiritual Conſolations, and then Reliſh them beſt. They find them ſweeteſt, when their taſte is not depraved with Earthly enjoyments, *We rejoyce in tribulation*, ſayes St. *Paul*, and here our Apoſtle inſiſts on that, to verifie the ſubſiſtance of this Joy in the midſt of the greateſt afflictions.

4. Spiritual Grief that ſeems moſt oppoſite to this Spiritual Joy prejudgeth it not, for there is a ſecret delight and ſweetneſs in the tears of Repentance, a Balm

Balm in them that refreshes the Soul, and even their saddest kind of mourning, *viz.* The dark times of Desertion, hath this in it, that is some way sweet, that those mournings after their Beloved, who absents himselfe, is a mark of their Love to him, and a true Evidence of it, and then all these spiritual sorrowes of what nature soever, are turn'd into Spiritual Joy, that's the proper End of them, they have a natural tendency that way.

5. But the Natural Man still doubts of this Joy we speak of; becaufe he sees and hears so little of it from them that profess to have it, and seem to have best right to it. If we consider the wretchedness of this Life, and especially the abundance of Sin that's in the World, what wonder though this their Joy retire much inward, and appear litle abroad, where all things are so contrary to it, and so few that are capable of it, to whom 'twere pertinent to vent it. Again we see here, 'tis *Unspeakable*, it were a poor thing if he that hath it could tell it all out. And when the Soul hath most of it, then it remains most within it self, and is so inwardly taken up with it, that possibly it can then least of all express it. 'Tis with Joyes, as they say of Cares, and Griefs, *Leves Loquuntur, ingentes stupent.* The deepest waters run stilleft, true Joy is a sollid grave thing, dwells more in the heart, then the Countenance; whereas on the Contrary, base and false Joyes, are but superficial skin-deep, (as we say) they are all in the face.

Pauperis est numerare pecus.

Res severa est verum gaudium. Sen.

Think not that it is with the godly, as the Prophet sayes of the wicked, that *there is no peace* to them: and the *LXX* Reads it, *no Joy.* Certainly 'tis true,

There

There is no true Joy to the wicked, they may revel and make a noise; but they Rejoyce not, the *Laughter of the fool, is as the crackling of thornes under the pot*, a great noise but little heat, and soon at an End. There is no continuing Feast, but that of *a good Conscience*. Wickedness, and real Joy cannot dwell together, as the very Moralist *Seneca* hath it often, and at large: but he that can say the Righteousness of Jesus Christ is Mine, and in him the favour of God, and the hope of Eternal Happiness, hath such a light as can shine in the darkest Dungeon, yea in the *dark valley of the shadow of death it selfe*.

Say not thou, if I betake my self to the way of Godliness, I must bid farewel to gladness, never a merry day more, no, on the contrary, never a truly Joyful day till then, yea, no dayes at all, but night to the soul, till it entertain Jesus Christ, and his kingdom, which consists in those, *Righteousness, Peace*, and *Joy in the Holy Ghost*. Thou dost not sacrifice *Isaac*, which signifies Laughter, as St. *Bern.* but a Ram. Not thy Joy, but filthy sinful delights that end in Sorrow.

Oh seek to know in your Experience what those Joyes mean, for all describing and commending it to you will not make you understand it, but *taste, and see that the Lord is good*, you cannot see, and know it, but by tasting it, and having tasted that goodness, all those poor Joyes you thought sweet before, will then be bitter and distasteful to you.

Laudamalis dulcedinem quantum potes qui non gustaverit non intelliget. Aug.

And you that have Christ yours by Believing know your happiness, and Rejoyce, and Glory in it, Whatsoever is your outward Condition, *Rejoyce*

Joyce alwayes, and again I ſay Rejoyce: for Light is ſown to the Righteous, and Joy for the upright in heart.

Verſes. 10, 11, 12.

10. *Of which Salvation the Prophets have enquired, and ſearched dilligently, who prophe ſied of the Grace that ſhould come unto you*

11. *Searching what, or what maner of time. the Spirit of Chriſt which was in them did ſignifie, when he teſtified before hand the ſufferings of Chriſt, and the Glory that ſhould follow.*

12. *Unto whom it was revealed, that not unto themſelves, but unto us they did Miniſter the things which are now reported unto you by them that have Preached the Goſpel unto you, with the Holy Ghoſt ſent down from Heaven, which things the Angels deſire to look into.*

IT is the Ignorance, or at leaſt the Inconſideratce, of Divine things, that makes Earthly things, whether good, or evil, appear great in our Eyes. Therefore the Apoſtles great aime is, by repreſenting the Certainty, and Excellency of the Belief, and Hope of Chriſtians to his afflicted Brethren, to ſtrengthen

ſtrengthen their minds againſt all diſcouragements, and oppoſitions. That they may account nothing too hard to doe, or ſuffer, for ſo high a Cauſe, and ſo happy an End. 'Tis the low and mean thoughts, and the ſhallow perſwaſſion we have of things that are ſpiritual, that is the Cauſe of all our Remiſſeneſs, and Coldneſs in them. The doctrine of Salvation he mention'd in the former *verſe*, at the End of our Chriſtian Faith, is illuſtrated in theſe words, from its Antiquity, Dignity, and infallible truth.

'Tis no more Invention: for the Prophets enquir'd after it, and foretold it in former ages from the beginning. Thus the prejudice of novelty is removed, that uſually meets the moſt ancient truth in its new diſcoveries.

Again, 'tis no mean thing that ſuch Men as were of unqueſtion'd Eminency in Wiſdom, and Holineſs did ſo much ſtudy, and ſearch after, and having found out, were careful not only to publiſh it in their own times, but to record it to poſterity, and this not by the private motion of their own ſpirits, but by the Acting, and Guidance of the Spirit of God, which ſets likewiſe the truth of their Teſtimony above all doubtfulneſs, and uncertainty.

But taking thoſe three *Verſes* entirely together, we have in them thoſe three things, teſtifying how Excellent the Doctrine of the Goſpel is. 1. We have the Principal Author of it. 2. The matter of it. 3. The worth of thoſe that are exerciſ'd about it, *viz.* The beſt of Men the Prophets, and Apoſtles in adminiſtring it, and the beſt of all the Creatures the Angels, in admiring it.

The firſt Author is the abſolutely firſt, the Spirit

of

of God in the prophets *Ver.* 11. in the Apoſtles *Ver.* 12. but *Ver.* 11. The ſpirit of Chriſt there, is the ſame ſpirit that He ſent down on his Diſciples after his Aſcending to Glory, and which ſpoke in his Prophets before his Deſcending to the Earth. It is the ſpirit of Chriſt, proceeding joyntly from him with the Father, as he is the ſon of God, and dwelling moſt richly, and fully in him as the ſon of Man.

The Holy Ghoſt is in himſelf Holineſs, and the Source, and worker of Holineſs, and Author of this holy doctrine that breaths nothing but holineſs, and urges it moſt preſſingly upon all that receive it.

This is the very life of divine Faith touching the Myſteries of Salvation, firmly to believe their *Revelation* by the Spirit of God, this the Word it ſelfe teſtifies, as we ſee, and it is really manifeſt in it, it carries the lively ſtamp of divine Inſpiration, but there muſt be a ſpirituall Eye to diſcern it, he that is blind knows not that the Sun ſhines at noon, but by the report of others; but they that ſee, are aſſur'd they ſee it, and aſſur'd by no other thing; but by its own Light, To aſk one that is a true Believer, how know you the Scriptures to be divine? is the ſame as to aſk him, how know you Light to be Light.

The Soul is nothing but Darkneſs, and blindneſs within, till that ſame ſpirit that ſhines without in the Word, ſhine likewiſe within it, and Effectually make it Light, but that once done, then is the Word Read with ſome meaſure of the ſame ſpirit by which it was written, and the Soul is aſcertain'd that it is divine, as in bodily ſight, there muſt be a meeting of inward Light *Viz.* the viſuall ſpirits with the outward *Object*,

The Spirit of God within, brings Evidence with it, and makes it self discernable in the word, this all arguments, all Books, and study cannot attain unto. *it is given to believe.*

No Man knows the things of a Man but the Spirit of Man. 1. *Cor.* 2. 11. But how holds that here? for if a Man speak out the things that are in his spirit then others may know them, But the Apostle's aime is there, to conclude, that the things of God, even such as were Revealed in his Word, could not be known but by his own spirit, 'its so, though Revealed, yet they remain still unreveal'd, till the spirit teach within, as well as without: Because intelligeable by none, but by those, that are the private Scholers and Hearers of the holy Ghost, the author of them; and because there are so few of these, therefore there is so little reall Believing amongst all the noise, and profession that we make of it, who is there (if you will believe them) that Believes not, and yet truely there is too much Cause to continue the Prophets regret. *who hath believed our Report?*

Learn then to suspect your selves, and to finde out your own Unbelief, that you may desire this Spirit to teach you inwardly those great Mysteries, that he outwardly Reveals, and Teaches by his Word. Make use of that promise and press the Lord with it. *They shall be all taught of God.*

But 2. There is here the *Matter* of this Doctrine which we have in three severall Expressions 1. That which is Repeated from the foregoing *Verse*, 'tis the *Doctrine of Salvation*, that's the end of it. And 2. The *Doctrine of sufferings and glory of Christ* as the means. 3. The *Doctrine of Grace*, the spring of both.

And

And 1. *Salvation*, the onely true Doctrine of true happineſs, which the wiſeſt of naturall Men have grop't and fought after with much earneſtneſs; but with no ſucceſs, they had no other then the dark Moon light of Nature, and that is not ſufficient to find it out, onely the Sun of Righteouſneſs ſhining in the Sphere of the Goſpel, *brings Life and Immortality to Light.* 2. *Tim.* 1. 10. No wonder that naturall Wiſdom, the deepeſt of it, is far from finding out the true method, and way of cure, ſeeing it cannot diſcover the diſeaſe of miſerable Mankind, *viz.* the ſinfull and wretched Condition of nature by the firſt Diſobedience.

Salvation expreſſes not only that which is Negative; but Implies likewiſe poſitive and perfect Happineſs, thus forgiveneſs of ſins is put for the whole nature of Juſtification frequently in ſcripture, 'tis more eaſy to ſay of this unſpeakable Happineſs, what it is not, then what it is, there is in it a full and final freedom from all Annoyance, all tears are wip'd away, and their fountain dryed up, all feeling, and fear, or danger of any the leaſt evil either of ſin, or puniſhment baniſh'd for ever, no Invaſions of Enemies, no robbing nor deſtroying in all this holy Mountain no voice of complaining in the ſtreets of the new Jeruſalem; here, 'tis at the beſt but interchanges of Mornings of joy, with weeping of ſad evenings, but there, there ſhall be no Light, no need of Sun, nor Moon, *For the glory of the Lord ſhall lighten it and the Lamb ſhall be the Light thereof.*

Well may the Apoſtle (as he doth here throughout this *Chap.*) lay this Salvation to Counter ballance all ſorrows, and Perſecutions, and whatſoever hard-

ſhips can be in the way to it. The ſoul that is perſwaded of this, in the midſt of Storms, and Tempeſts enjoys a Calme, Triumphs in Diſgraces, grows Richer by all its Loſſes, and by Death it ſelf, attaines this Immortall life.

Happy are they that have their eye fixed upon this Salvation, and are longing and waiting for it, that ſee ſo much of that brightneſs, and Glory, as darkns all the luſture of Earthly things to them, and makes them trample upon thoſe things, which formerly they admir'd, and doted on with the reſt of the fooliſh world. Thoſe things we account ſo much of, are but as rotten wood, or Glow-wormes that ſhine onely in the night of our Ignorance, and Vanity: ſo ſoon as the Light beam of this Salvation enters into the ſoul, it cannot much eſteem or affect any thing below it, and if thoſe glances of it that ſhine in the Word, and in the Soul of a Chriſtian be ſo bright, and powerfull, what then ſhall the full ſight and real poſſeſſion of it be?

The worker of this Salvation whom the Prophets and Apoſtles make the ſumme of all their doctrine is Jeſus Chriſt, and the ſumme of that work of Redemption, as we have it here, is his Humiliation and Exaltation. His Sufferings, and the Glory that followed thereupon, now, though this ſerve as an Encouragement to Chriſtians in their Sufferings, that this is the way by which their Lord went into his Glory, and is true alſo of Chriſt myſticall, the Head with the Members, as the ſcriptures often teach us. Yet I conceive 'tis here mainely intended as a ſummary of the work of our Redemption by Jeſus Chriſt, relateing to the ſalvation mention'd

Verſe

Verſe. 10. And as the Cauſe for the Effect, ſo 'tis put for it here. The Prophets enquired, and prophecied of that Salvation. How? By ſearching out, and foretelling the Sufferings, and Glory of Chriſt: His ſufferings then, and his after Glories are our Salvation His ſufferings is the purchace of our Salvation, and His Glory is our aſſurance of it, He as our head having Triumph'd, and being Crown'd, makes us likewiſe ſure of Victory, and Triumph. Having entered poſſeſſion to glory makes our Hope certain; this is his prayer, *that where he is there we may be alſo* and this his own aſſertion, *the glory which thou gaveſt Me, I have given them. Joh.* 17. 22, 24. this is his promiſe, *becauſe I live ye ſhall live alſo Joh.* 14. 19. Chriſt, and the Believer are One, this is that Great Myſtery the Apoſtle ſpeaks of, *Eph.* 5. though 'its a common known truth, the words and ourſide of it obvious to all, yet none can underſtand it, but they that indeed partake of it, by vertue of that Unction their ſins were accounted His, and Chriſts ſufferings are accounted theirs, and by conſequence, His Glory the conſequent of his ſufferings is likewiſe theirs, there is an indiſſoluble connection betwixt the life of Chriſt, and of a Believer. *Our life is hid with Chriſt in God*; and therefore while we remaine there, our life is there, though hid, *and when he who is our life ſhall appear we likewiſe ſhall appear with him in glory. Coloſ.* 3. 14. Seeing the ſufferings, and Glory of our Redeemer, are the maine ſubject of the Goſpel and the Cauſes of our ſalvation, and our comfortable perſuaſion of it, 'its a wonder that they are not more the matter of our thoughts, ſhould we not daily conſider the bit-

terneſs of that cup of Wrath he drunk for us, and be wrought to Repentance, and Hatred of ſin, to have ſin imbitter'd to us by that Conſideration, and find the ſweetneſs of his Love in that he did drink it, and by that, be deeply poſſeſſed with Love to him, theſe things we now and then ſpeak of, but they ſink not. As our Saviour exhorts, where he is ſpeaking of thoſe ſame ſufferings. O that they were engraven on our hearts and that ſin were Crucified in us, and the world Crucified to us, and we unto the world by the croſſe of Chriſt.

And then conſidering the Glory wherein he is, And to have our eye often upon that, and our hearts ſolaccing and refreſhing themſelves frequently with the thoughts of that Place, and condition wherein Chriſt is, and where our hopes are ere long to behold him. Both to ſee his Glory, and to be Glorified with him, is it not reaſon? Yea 'its neceſſary it cannot be otherwiſe, if *our Treaſure, and Head be there, that our hearts be there likewiſe.*

The Third Expreſſion here of the Goſpell, is, that 'tis the Doctrine of Grace. The work of Redemption it ſelf, and ſeverall parts of it, and the Doctrine revealing it, have all the name of Grace: becauſe they all flow from free Grace, that is their ſpring, and firſt Cauſe.

And 'tis this wherein the Doctrine of Salvation is mainly comfortable, that it is free, *ye are ſaved by Grace. Eph.* 2. 8. 'tis true God requires faith, it is through faith, but he that requires that gives it too, *that's not of your ſelves 'tis the gift of God* 'tis wonderfull Grace to ſave upon believing, believe in Jeſus for Salvation, and live accordingly and 'tis done; there

there is no more requir'd to thy pardon; but that thou receive it by faith. But truely Nature cannot do this, 'tis as impoſſible for us of our ſelves to Believe, as to doe, this then is that which makes it all Grace from Beginning to End, that God not onely ſaves upon believeing, but gives believeing it ſelf, Chriſt is called not onely the Author and finiſher of our Salvation, but even of our Faith.

Free Grace being rightly apprehended, is that, which ſtayes the heart in all Eſtates, and keeps it from fainting, even in its ſaddeſt times, what though there is nothing in my ſelf, but matter of ſorrow, and diſcomfort, it cannot be other wiſe, 'its not from my ſelf that I look for Comfort at any time: but from my God, and his free Grace. Here is Comfort enough for all times, when I'm at the beſt, I ought not, I dare not rely upon my ſelf, when I m at the worſt, I may, and ſhould rely upon Chriſt and his ſufficient Grace. Though I be the vileſt ſinner that ever came to him, yet I know he is more Gracious then I am ſinfull, yea, the more my ſin is, the more Glory will it be to his Grace to pardon it, it will appear the richer, doth not *David* argue thus. *Pſa.* 25. 11. *For thy names ſake, O Lord, pardon mine iniquity for it is great*: But 'Tis an empty fruitleſs notion of Grace, to Conſider it onely in the Generall, and in a wandring way, we are to look upon it particularly, as addreſs'd to us, and 'tis not enough, that it comes to us, in the meſſage of him that brings it onely to our ear, but that we may know what it is, it muſt come into us, then 'tis ours indeed; but if it come to us in the meſſage only, and we ſend it away again, if it ſhall ſo depart, we had

better

better never have heard of it, it will leave a Guiltineſs behind it, that ſhall make all our ſins weigh much heavier then before.

Enquire whether you have entertain'd this grace, or not, whether it be come to you, and into you, or not, whether the *kingdom of God is within you.* As our Saviour ſpeaks, 'tis the woefulleſt condition that can be, not to be far from the kingdom of God, and yet to fall ſhort, and miſs of it. The Grace of God revealed in the Goſpell is intreating you daily to receive it, is willing to become yours, if you Reject it not, were your eyes open to behold the Beauty, and Excellency of this Grace, there would need no deliberation, yea, you would endure none, deſire your eyes to be opened, and light from above, that you may know it, and your hearts open'd, that you may be happy by receiving it.

The Apoſtle ſpeaking of Jeſus Chriſt, as the foundation of our Faith, calls him *the ſame yeſterday, and to day and for ever.* Yeſterday under the Law, to day in thoſe primitive times, neereſt his Incarnation, and for ever, in all ſucceeding ages. And the Reſemblance holds good between the two Cherubims over the Mercy-ſeat, and the two Teſtaments; thoſe had their faces towards one another, and both toward the Mercy-ſeat, and theſe look to one another in their Doctrine, agreeing perfectly, and both look to Chriſt the true Mercy-ſeat, and the great Subject of the ſcriptures. This we ſee here, the things that the Prophets foretold to come, and the Apoſtles reported were accompliſhed, were the ſame, and from the ſame ſpirit, they were the ſufferings of Chriſt, and his after Glory, and in them our Salva-

tion

tion by free Grace. The Propheſies look forward to the times of the Goſpel; and the things then fulfilled, look back to the Propheſies, and each confirms the other, meeting all in Chriſt who is their truth and Center.

We have ſpoken already of the Author, and ſubject of this ſalvation; Now we come to ſay ſomething of thoſe who are Employed about it, as well in Adminiſtring to it, as in Admiring it. And thoſe are, the Prophets, and Apoſtles, the firſt foretold what was to come, the ſecond Preached them when they came to paſs.

In the Prophets there are three things here remarked. 1. Their Dilligence. 2. The Succeſs of it. 3. The Extent of its uſefulneſs.

This diſparages not their extraordinary Viſions, and Revelations, and that which is added, that the Spirit of Chriſt was in them, and did foretel the things to come.

It was their conſtant Duty, and they being ſenſible of their duty, made it their conſtant Exerciſe, to ſearch into Divine Miſteries by Meditation, and Prayer: yea, and by Reading ſuch holy writers as were already extant in their times, as *Dan.* 9. and 10. For which Cauſe, ſome taking the word actively, Conceive *Daniel*, to be call'd there a *Man of deſires*, becauſe of his great deſire, and dilligent ſearch after the knowledge of thoſe High things. And in this dilligent way, they conſtantly waited for theſe Revelations, which ſometimes, when it ſeem'd good unto the Spirit of God, were imparted unto them.

Propheſie reſideth not (ſay the *Hebrew* Doctors)

but in a Man that is great in Wisdom and Vertue, whose affections overcome him not in any worldly things; but by his knowledge, he overcometh his Affections continually; on such a Man the Holy Spirit cometh down. And his Soul is associated to the Angels, and he is changed to another Man. thus *Maimonides*.

'Twas the way of the Prince of darkness amongst the Idolatrous Gentiles, to speak either through senseless Statues, or where they uttered his Oracles, it was by such profane Prophets as he had, to cause them in a fury tumble forth words they understood not, and knew not what they said, but the Spirit of God being Light, and the Holy Prophets Inspired with it, they being dilligent attendants on its Motions and Searchers of the Misteries of Salvation, understood well what their business was, and to what purpose tended those things of the Kingdom of Christ, which they by Inspiration did foretel; and therefore bended their thoughts this way, praying, and searching, and waiting for Answers, studying to keep the passage, as it were open, for the beams of those Divine Revelations to come in at; not to have their Spirits clogg'd, and stopt with earthly and sinful Affections, endeavouring for that calm and quiet Composure of Spirit in which the voyce of Gods Spirit might be the better heard. Thus *Psal.* 85. 8. and *Hab.* 2. 1. In both which places followes an excellent Propheſie Concerning Christ, and that Salvation which he wrought for his People.

Were the Prophets not exempted from the pains of Search, and Inquiry, that had the Spirit of God not only in a high measure, but after a singular manner?

manner? how unbeseeming then is slothfulness and Idleness in us? whether is it, that we judge our selves advantag'd with more of the spirit then those holy men? or that we Esteem the Doctrine, and Misteries of Salvation on which they bestow'd so much of their labour, unworthy of ours? these are both so gross that we will be loath to own either of them, and yet our lazines, and negligence in searching after those things, seems to charge us with some such thought as one of those.

You will say, this concerns those that succeed to the work of the Prophets, and Apostles in ordinary, the Ministers of the Gospel. And it doth indeed, fall first upon them. It is their task indeed to be dilligent, and as the Apostle exhorts his *Timothy, to attend on reading*, but above all to study to have much Experimental knowledge of God, and his Son Jesus Christ, and for this end, to disentangle, and free themselves as much as is possible, from lower things to the search of heavenly Misteries, *Prov.* 18. 1. As they are called Angels, so ought they to be as much as they can attain to it, in a constant nearness unto God, and attendance on him, like unto the Angels, and look much into these things, as the Angels here are said to do, to endeavour to have their souls purified from the affections of sin, that the light of Divine truth, may shine clear in them, and not be fogg'd, and misted with filthy vapours, to have the Impressions of God clearly written in their breasts, not mix'd and blurr'd with earthly characters, seasoning all their readings and common way of studies with much Prayer, and divine Meditation. They that Converse most with the King, and are inward

with him, know moſt of the affairs of ſtate, and even the ſecrets of them, that are hid from others, and certainly thoſe of Gods Meſſengers that are oftenest with himſelf, cannot but underdand their buſineſs beſt, and know moſt of his meaning, and the affairs of his Kingdom. And to that End 'tis confeſs'd, that ſingular dilligence is requir'd in them; but ſeeing the Lord hath ſaid without exception, that *his ſecret is with them that fear him*, and that he will reveal himſelf and his ſaving truths to thoſe that humbly ſeek them. Do not any of you your ſelves ſo much injury, as to barr your ſelves from ſharing in your meaſure of the ſearch of theſe ſame things, that were the ſtudy of the Prophets, and which by their ſtudy, and publiſhing them, are made the more acceſſible, and eaſie to us. Conſider that they doe concern us univerſally, if we would be ſaved; for 'tis Salvation here that they ſtudied, *Search the Scriptures*, ſayes our Saviour, *Joh.* 5. And that is the motive, if there can be any that may be thought in reaſon preſſing enough, or if we doe indeed think ſo, *For in them ye think to have Eternal life*, And it is there to be found, Chriſt is this Salvation, and that Eternal life, and he adds further *it is they* (thoſe Scriptures) *that teſtifie of me.* Theſe are the Golden mines in which alone the abiding treaſures of Eternity are to be found, and therefore worthy all the digging, and paines we can beſtow on them.

Beſides their Induſtry in this enquiry, and ſearch, there is here expreſſed their ardent affection to the thing they Propheſied of, and their Longings, and Wiſhes for its Accompliſhment *viz.* The coming of

Jeſus

Jesus Christ, the promised Messiah, the top of all their desires, the great Hope and the Light of Israel. No wonder they desired his day, that had so much joy in the seeing it: So far off, as over the head almost of two thousand years, Faith overlooking them, and foreseeing it so in *Abraham*, his heart danc'd for joy, *Joh.* 8. 36. Abraham *saw my day and Rejoyced.*

And this is conceived to be the meaning of those Expressions in that mistical Song, as they suit those times of the Jewish Church, breathing out her longings for the coming of her Beloved, his speaking by the Prophets, were his voice as afar off: but his incarnation was his coming near, and kissing his Church, *with the kisses of his mouth*, as *Cant. Chap.* 1. *Verse* 1. and to omit other expressions throughout the Song, the last *Chapter Verse* 1. is tender and pathetical. *Oh that thou wert as my Brother*, &c. and the last words of it, *Make haste my Beloved, and be thou like a Roe, or a young Hart upon the Mountain of Spices.* And when this salvation came in the fulness of time, we see how joyfully good old *Simeon* embraces it, and thought he had seen enough, and therefore upon the sight desired to have his eyes clos'd. *Now let thy Servant depart in Peace, for my eyes have seen thy salvation.* Therefore our Saviour sayes to his Apostles. *Math.* 13. 16. *Blessed are your eyes for they see, for many Prophets and righteous men have desired to see those things which ye see, and have not seen them.* This is he whom we disesteem and make so small account of, being now so clearly Revealed that they studied, and sought, and wish'd so much for, so many ages before.

Now

Now the ſucceſs is, in ſeeking they found the certainty, and the time of that his coming, they ſought out till they found, and then they propheſied of that Salvation, and Grace, they ſearched what, and what manner of time, and the Spirit did manifeſtly foretel it them.

They ſought to know what manner of time it ſhould come to paſs, *viz.* In a time of great diſtreſs, and bad Eſtate of the People, as all the Prophets teſtifie, and particularly that place *Gen.* 49. 10. gives an expreſs character of the time, though there be ſome diverſity of Expoſition of the particular words, yet the main ſenſe is agreed on by all ſound Interpreters, and the *Chal. Paraph.* hath it expreſly, that that *Shiloh*, is the Meſſiah.

And of his ſufferings, and after glories they propheſied very clearly as *Pſal.* 22. *Iſa.* 53. &c. And our Saviour himſelf makes uſe of their teſtimony in both theſe points, *S. Luke* 24. 25, 26. 27.

Then there is the benefit of their ſearch, and finding, in the extent of it, in *Verſe* 13. to the Believers in the Apoſtles times, and to the ſucceeding Chriſtian Church, and ſo to us in theſe dayes; but in ſome peculiar ſenſe the Prophets miniſtred to them of thoſe times, wherein Chriſt did ſuffer, and enter into glory; for that they were the firſt that enjoyed the accompliſhment of thoſe Propheſies, they being fulfilled in their own dayes.

They knew well that the things they Propheſied were not to be fulfilled in their own times, and therefore in their Prophecying concerning them, though both themſelves, and People of God that were contemporary with them did reap the comfort of that Doctrine,

Doctrine, and were by faith partakers of the ſame Salvation, and ſo it was to themſelves as well as to us, yet in regard of the accompliſhment, they knew it was not to themſelves, it was not to be brought to paſs in their dayes, and therefore, ſpeaking of the Glory of Chriſts Kingdome, they often foretel it for the Latter dayes, as their phraſe is, And as we have the things they Propheſied of, ſo we have this peculiar benefit of their Propheſies, that their ſuiting ſo perfectly with the event, and performance, ſerves much to confirm our Chriſtian Faith.

There is a fooliſh, and miſerable way of verifying this, Men miniſtring the Doctrine of Salvation to others, and not to themſelves, carrying it all in their heads, and tongues, and none of it in their hearts, not hearing it even while they Preach it, reaching the Bread of Life to others, and eating none of it themſelves. And this the Apoſtle ſayes, that he was moſt careful to avoid, and therefore dealt ſeverely with his body, that it might not this way endanger his ſoul. *I beat down my body*, ſayes he, *and keep it in ſubjection, leſt when I have Preach'd to others I my ſelfe ſhould be a Caſtaway.* 'Tis not in this ſenſe, that the Prophets miniſtred to others, and not to themſelves. No, they had Joy and Comfort in the very hopes of the Redeemer to come, and the belief of the things that any others had ſpoke, and that themſelves ſpoke concerning him, and thus the true Preachers of the Goſpel though their Miniſterial gifts, are for the uſe of others, yet that Salvation they Preach, they lay hold on, and partake of themſelves, as your boxes

wherein

wherein perfumes are kept for Garments, and other uſes, are themſelves perfum'd by keeping them.

We ſee how the Prophets Miniſtred it, as the great and never failing Conſolation of the Church in thoſe dayes, in all their diſtreſſes 'tis a wonder when they are foretelling either the ſorrowes and afflictions or temporal reſtorement, and deliverances of that People of the Jewes, what ſudden outleaps they will make to ſpeak of the Kingdome of Jeſus Chriſt, and the dayes of the Goſpel, that who conſiders not the ſpirit they were moved by, would think it were Incoherence, and Impertinency; but they knew well what they meant, that thoſe newes were never unſeaſonable, nor beſides the purpoſe, that the ſweetneſs of thoſe thoughts, *viz.* The Conſideration of the Meſſiah was able (to ſuch as belie'v'd it) to allay the bitterеſt diſtreſſes, and that the great deliverance he was to worke, was the top and ſumme of all deliverances. Thus their Prophecies of him were preſent Comfort to themſelves, and other believers then, and further, were to ſerve for a clear evidence of the divine truth of thoſe Miſteries in the dayes of the Goſpel in and after their fulfilling.

Theſe ſweet ſtreams of their Doctrine doe as the Rivers, they made their own banks fertile, and pleaſant as it ran by, and flowed ſtill forward to after Ages and by the Confluence of more ſuch Prophecies grew greater as it went, till it fell in with the main current of the Goſpel in the New Teſtament, both acted, and Preach'd by the great Prophet himſelfe, whom they foretold to come, and recorded by his Apoſtles and Evangeliſts, and thus united into one River,

River, clear as Cryſtall, This doctrine of Salvation in the Scriptures, hath ſtill refreſh'd the City of God, his Church under the Goſpel, and ſtill ſhall do ſo, till it empty it ſelf into the Ocean of Eternity.

The firſt diſcovery we have of this ſtream neareſt its ſource, the Eternall purpoſe of divine mercy, is in that Promiſe which the Lord himſelf preach'd in few words, to our firſt parents, that had newly made themſelves, and their Race miſerable *The ſeed of the woman ſhall break the head of the ſerpent*, Gen. 3. 15.

The agreement of their Predictions with the things themſelves, and the preaching of the Apoſtles following, the other kind of Men employed in this Salvation make up one Organ, or great Inſtrument, Tun'd by the ſame hand, and ſounding by the ſame breath of the ſpirit of God, and that is expreſſ'd here, as the common Authority of the Doctrine in both, and the cauſe of their harmony, and agreement in it.

And all theſe extraordinary Gifts of the holy Ghoſt, the Calling of Prophets, and Apoſtles, and Evangeliſts, and the ordinary Miniſtry of the Goſpel by paſtors, and Teachers, tends to that great deſigne, that God hath in building his Church; making up that great aſſembly of all the Elect, to enjoy and praiſe him for all Eternity. *Eph.* 4. 11. For this end ſent he his Son out of his bolome, and and for this end ſends he forth his meſſengers to divulge that ſalvation, that his Son hath wrought, and ſends down his ſpirit upon them, that they may be fitted for ſo high a ſervice. Thoſe Cherubims won-

der how guilty man escapes their flaming swords, and Reenters paradise, The Angels see that their Companions that fell are not restor'd, but their room fill'd up with the spirits of just men, and they envy it not, *which Mistery the Angels desire to look into*, and this is added in the close of these words for the extolling of it.

The Angels look upon what they have seen already fulfill'd with delight and admiration, and what remains, namely, the full accomplishment of this great work in the end of time, they look upon, with desire to see it finish'd, 'tis not a slight glance they take of it, but they fix their eye, and look stedfastly on it, *viz.* That mistery of godliness, *God manifested in the flesh*, and 'tis added, *seen of Angels*.

The word made flesh drawes the eyes of those glorious Spirits, and possesses them with wonder to see the Almighty God-head joyn'd with the weakness of a Man, yea, of an Infant. He that stretcheth forth the heavens, bound up in swadling cloaths. And to pass all the wonders of his life, this is beyond all admiration, that the Lord of Life, was subject to death, and that his Love, and Rebellious mankind, moved him both to take on, and lay down that life.

'Tis no wonder the Angels admire those things and delight to look upon them, but 'tis strange that we do not so. They veiw them stedfastly, and we neglect them, either we consider them not at all, or give them but a transient look, half an eye. That which was the great business of the Prophets, and Apostles, both for their own times, and to convey them to us, we regard not; and turne our eyes to fooliſh wandering thoughts, which Angels are ashamed at. They are not so concern'd in this great mystery as we are, They are but

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mere beholders in compariſon of us, yea, they ſeem rather to be loſers ſomeway, that our nature in it ſelf inferiour to theirs, is in Jeſus Chriſt exalted above theirs. *Heb.*2. 16. We bow down to the earth, and ſtudy, and grovell in it,, rake into the very bowels of it, and content our ſelves with the outſide of the unſearchable riches of Chriſt, and look not within it, but they having no will, nor deſire, but for the glory of God, being pure flames of fire burning onely in love to him, are no leſs delighted then amazed with the bottomleſs wonders of his wiſdom, and goodneſs ſhining in the work of our Redemption.

'Tis our ſhame, and our folly that we loſe our ſelves, and our thoughts in poor childiſh things, and trifle away our days we know not how, and let theſe rich myſteries lye unregarded, they look up, upon the deity in it ſelf with continuall admiration, but that they look down, to this myſtery is another wonder. We give them an ear in publick, and in a cold formal way ſtop Conſcience's mouth, with ſome religious performances in private, and no more: But to have deep and frequent thoughts, and to be raviſh'd in the meditation of our Lord Jeſus once on the croſs and now in glory, how few of us are acquainted with this?

We ſee here excellent Company, and Examples, not onely of the beſt of Men that have been, but we have them fellow-ſervants, and fellow-Students, if that can perſwade us, we may all ſtudy the ſame Leſſon with the very Angels, and have the ſame thoughts with them, this the ſoul doth, that often entertains it ſelf with the delightfull admiration of Jeſus Chriſt, and the Redemption he hath wrought for us.

Verſe. 13.

Wherefore Gird up the loyns of your mind be ſober and hope to the End, for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the Revelation *of Jeſus Chriſt.*

THe great error of Mans mind, and the cauſe of all his Errors of Life, is the diverting of the ſoul from God, and turning down-ward to inferiour confidences, and comforts; and this miſchoyce is the very root of all our miſeries, therefore the maine end of the holy word of God, is, to untye the hearts of Men from the world, and reduce them. To God as their onely reſt, and ſolid comfort; and this is here the Apoſtles mark at which all the preceeding diſcourſe aimes, it all meets and terminates in this exhortation. *Wherefore gird up the loyns of your mind* &c.

In the words are thoſe 3 things 1. the great ſtay, and comfort of the ſoul, which the Apoſtle repeats, and repreſents to his afflicted brethren. 2. his Exciting them to the right apprehenſion, and confident Expectation of it, 3. the Inference of that Exhortation.

The matter of their comfort is, *the grace which is brought to them at the Revelation of Jeſus Chriſt.* ſome for *grace* read *joy*, having as it ſeem's for χαριν read χαραν the words are not more near one to an other, than the things they ſignify, *Grace* and *joy*, but 'its moſt commonly thus read.

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The eſtate of Grace, and that of glory are not onely ſo inſeparably connexed, but ſo like one to the other, yea, ſo eſſentialy the ſame, that the ſame expreſſions in ſcripture do often fit both of them, and ſo fit them, that it is doubtfull for which of the two to underſtand them, but the hazard is not great, ſeeing they are ſo near, and ſo one, grace being glory begun, and glory grace compleated, both often called the Kingdome of God. So *grace* here *brought to them*, is either the doctrine of grace in the Goſpel, wherein Jeſus Chriſt, is reveal'd, and that Grace in him, for all the whole tenour of the Covenant of Grace, and every Clauſe of it holds in him. His precious name runs throw it all, 'tis the Grace of ſalvation to be fully perfected at the laſt, and cleareſt Revelation of Jeſus Chriſt, and for this rather I take it here, for that the Apoſtles neareſt foregoing words were concerning that, and it is ſet up here as the object of hope, which though often put for faith, yet in its proper notion, looks out to that which is to come.

This is the laſt act of Grace, and yet ſtill it is called by it ſelf, and not turn'd into the name of merit, notwithſtanding all the obedience, and all the ſufferings of the Saints that have gone before it, yea, *even the ſalvation to be revealed* to them is called Grace. but 'tis needleſs to inſiſt on this, for certainly none that partake of Grace, will be of another mind, or ever admit the mixture of the leaſt notion of ſelf deſerving.

Though much diſpute hath been beſtow'd on this, and Queſtions multiplying in the diſputants hands, (as is uſuall in Controverſies) one growing out of another

another, yet truely, I think, the debate in this, to be but waſte, 'tis not onely againſt the voyce of the ſcriptures, and of Grace it ſelf in the ſoul; but even againſt ſound Reaſon, to imagine any meriting, properly taken, in any mere Creature at his Creators hands, who hath given him his being of which gift all his ſervices, and obedience fall ſhort, ſo that he can never come to be upon even diſengaged terms, much leſs to oblige a new, and deſerve ſomewhat farther. beſides, that ſame Grace by which any ſerves, and obeys God, is likewiſe his own gift, as 'tis ſaid, *All things come of thee, and of thine own have I given thee*; both the ability, and the will of giving to him, is from him, ſo that in theſe reſpects, not Angels; nor Man in Innocency could properly merit at the hands of God, much leſs Man loſt, redeemed again, and ſo coming under the new obligation of Infinite Mercy. And this is ſo evident a truth, that the learnedſt and moſt ingenuous Jeſuits, and Schoolmen have in divers paſſages of their writings acknowledg'd it, that there cannot be any Compenſation, and much leſs merit from the creature to God. but onely in relation to his own free purpoſe, and the tenour of his word, and Covenant, which is inviolable, becauſe he is unchangeable, and truth it ſelfe.

His firſt grace he gives freely, and no leſs freely the increaſes of it, and with the ſame gracious hand ſets on the Crown of glory upon all the Grace that he hath given before. 'Tis but the following forth of his own work, and fulfilling his own thoughts of free Love, which love hath no cauſe, but in himſelf, and finds none worthy; But gives them all the worthineſs they have, and accepts of their Love, not as

as worthy in it ſelf to be accepted, but becauſe he himſelf hath wrought it in them, not onely the firſt taſtes, but the full draught of the waters of life is freely given *Revel.* 22. 17. nothing brought with them but thirſt.

That is to be brought] not that is brought, or that ſhall be brought, but if we will render it ſtrictly, it is, *that is a bringing to you.* That bleſſedneſs, that Conſummation of grace the Saints are haſtening forward to, walking on in their way whereſoever it lyes indifferently, *through honour, and diſhonour, through evill report, and good report.* And as they are haſtening to it, it is haſtning to them in the courſe of time, every day brings it nearer to them than before, and notwithſtanding all difficulties, and dangers in the way, they that have their eye and hopes upon it, ſhall arrive at it, and it ſhall be brought ſafe to their hand, all the malice of men and Devils ſhall not be able to cut them ſhort of this grace, that is a bringing to them againſt the day of the *Revelation of Jeſus Chriſt.*

At the Revelation of Jeſus Chriſt.] This is repeated from the *7th. Verſe.* and it is *a day of Revelation, a Revelation of the juſt judgement of God. Rom.* 2. 5. And thus it would be to all, were it not, that it is withall, the *Revelation of Jeſus Chriſt*; therefore is it a day of Grace, all Light, and bleſſedneſs to them that are in him, becauſe they ſhall appear in him, and if he be glorious, they ſhall not be inglorious, and aſhamed, indeed were our ſecret ſins then to be ſet before our own eyes, in their affrightfulleſt viſage, and to be ſet open to the view of Angels, and Men, and to the eye of divine Juſtice, and we left alone ſo revealed, who is there that could gather

any

any comfort ? and would not rather have their thoughts fill'd with horrour at the remembrance and expectation of that day, and thus indeed all unbelieving and ungodly Men may look upon it, and find it terrible, but to those that are shadowed under the Robe of Righteous Jesus, yea that are made one with him, and shall partake of his glory in his appearing, 'tis the sweetest, the most comfortable thought that their souls can be entertain'd, and possess'd withall, to remember this glorious Revelation of their Redeemer.

'Tis their great grief here, not that themselves are hated, and vilified ; but that their Lord Jesus is so little known and therefore so much despised in the world, he is vail'd, and hid from the world, many Nations acknowledge him not at all, and many of those that do in word confess, yet in deed deny him, that have a form of Godliness and do not onely want but mock and scoffe the power of it, and to such Christ is not known, his Excellencies are hid from their eyes, now this glory of their Lord being tender to them that Love him, they rejoyce much in the consideration of this, that there is a day at hand, wherein he shall appear in his bright, and full glory to all nations, and all shall be forc'd to acknowledge him it shall be with out doubt, and unquestion'd to all, that here is the *Messiah, the Redeemer*, the Judge of the world.

And as it is his day of Revelation, 'its also the Revelation of all the adopted sons of God in him, *Rom.* 8. 9. they are now accounted the refuse of the world, exposed to all kind of contempts, but then; the beams of Christ's glory shall beautifie them, and they shall be known for his 1 *Joh.* 3. 2. *Col.* 3, 4.

Next

Next there is The Exhortation. *Hope to the end.* The difference of these two graces, *faith* and *hope* is so small, that the one is often taken for the other in Scripture; 'tis but a divers aspect of the same confidence, faith apprehending the infallible truth of those divine Promises, of which *Hope* doth assuredly expect the accomplishment, and that is their truth, so that this immediately results from the other. This is the Anchor pitch'd within the vail that keeps the soul firm against all the tossings on these swelling Seas, and the winds and tempests that arise upon them. The firmest thing in this Inferiour world is a believing soul.

Faith establishes the heart on Jesus Christ, and Hope lifts it up, being on that Rock over the head of all intervenient Dangers, Crosses, and Tentations, and sees the glory and happiness that followes after them.

To the end] Or perfectly, and therefore the Christian seeks most earnestly, and yet waits most patiently, *Psal.* 130. 6. Indeed this hope is perfect in continuance, 'tis a hope unto the end, because 'tis perfect in its nature, although imperfect in degree, sometimes doubtings intermixed with it in the Christian soul, yet this is *their* infirmity, as the *Psalmist* speaks, not the infirmity, and insufficiency of the object of their hope. Worldly hopes are in their own nature imperfect, they do imply in their very being doubtfulness, and wavering, because the things whereon they are built are inconstant, and uncertain and full of deceit, and disappointments, how can that Hope be immoveable, that is built upon moving sands or quagmire. 'Tis that which is it self unfix-

ed, cannot give ſtability to any other thing reſting on it, but becauſe the truth and goodneſs of the immutable God is the foundation of ſpiritual hope, therefore it is aſſur'd, and like Mount Sion that cannot be removed, and this is its perfection.

Now the Apoſtle exhorts his Brethren, to endeavour to have their hearts poſſeſs'd with as high a meaſure, and degree of this hope, as may be, ſeeing in it ſelf it is ſo perfect and firm, ſo aſſur'd an Hope, that they aſpire to all the aſſurance and perfection of it they can attain.

This Hope, as I conceive, is not only to have the habit of it ſtrong in the Soul, but to act it often, to be often turning that way; to view that approaching day of Liberty. *Lift up your heads for the day of your Redemption draweth nigh.* Where this hope is often acted, it will grow ſtrong, as all habits doe and where 'tis ſtrong, it will work much, and delight to act often, and will controll both the doubtings and the other many impertinent thoughts of the mind, and force them to yeild the place to it: Certainly they that affect that coming of Chriſt much, will look often out to it, we are uſually hoping, after other things, that doe but offer themſelves to draw us after them, and to ſcorn us. What are the breaſts of moſt of us, but ſo many neſts of fooliſh hopes, and fears intermixed, that entertain us day and night, and ſteal away our precious hours from us, that might be laid out ſo gainfully upon the wiſe and ſweet thoughts of Eternity, and upon the bleſſed and aſſured hope of the coming of our beloved Saviour.

The other words of Exhortation hereunſed are ſubſervient

ſubſervient to this end, that this hope may be the more perfect and firm, and is much after the ſame manner joyned by our Saviour. *Luke* 12. 35. with the expectance and waiting for his coming, and in this poſture the *Iſraelites* eating the paſſover were expecting their deliverance, ſo we our full and final freedom.

If you would have much of this, call off your affections from other things, that they may be capable of much of it. The ſame eye cannot both look up to Heaven, and down to earth at the ſame time; the more your affections are truſs'd up, and diſentangled from the world, the more expedite and active will they be in this hope; the more ſober they are, the leſs will they fill themſelves with the courſe delights of earth, the more room will there be in them, and the more they ſhall be filled with this hope. It is great folly in our ſpiritual warfare, to charge our ſelves ſuperfluouſly. All fulneſs of one thing hinders the receiving, and admittance of any other; eſpecially of things ſo oppoſite, as theſe fulneſſes are oppoſed. *Be not drunk with wine wherein is exceſs but be ye filled with the Holy Ghoſt*, ſaith the Apoſtle, that is a brutiſh fulneſs, makes a Man no Man, this Divine, makes him more than a Man, 'twere happy to be filled thus, as that it might be call'd a kind of drunkenneſs, as it is was with the Apoſtles. *Act.* 2.

Be ſober] Or Watch, the ſame word ſignifies both, and with good reaſon; for you know the unſober cannot watch. Now though one main part of ſobriety is that which more properly and particularly bears this name, *temperance* in meat, and drink,

and against this, not only the purity, and spiritualness of Religion; but even moral vertue inveighs as its special Enemy; yea nature it self, and they that only naturally consider the body, and its interest of Life, and health, find reason enough to cry down this base intemperance, which is so hateful by its own deformity, and withal carries its punishment along with it. But this sobriety is indeed most necessary for the preservation of grace, and spiritual temper of the soul, and is here intended; yet I conceive 'tis not all that is here meant, the word is more general, for the moderate and sober use of all things worldly, as he sayes, *Gird up the loynes of your mind*, so 'tis to be understood, let your minds be sober, all your affections inwardly attempered to your spiritual condition, not glutting your selves with fleshly, and perishing delights of any kind, for the more you take in of these, the less you shall have of spiritual comfort, and of this perfect hope. They that pour out themselves upon present delights look not like strangers, and hopeful expectants of another Life, and better pleasures.

And certainly the Captain of our Salvation will not own them for his followers, that lye down to drink of these waters, but only such as in passant take of them with their hand. As excessive eating or drinking makes the body sickly, and lazy, fit for nothing, but sleep, and besots the mind, cloyes up the way with filthy crudities through which the spirits should pass, bemires them, and makes them move heavily as a coach in a deep way; thus doth all immoderate use of the world, and its delights wrong the soul in its spiritual condition, makes it

sickly

ſickly and feeble, full of ſpiritual diſtempers, and inactivity; benummes the graces of the ſpirit, and fills the ſoul with ſleepy vapours, makes it grow ſecure, and heavy in ſpiritual exerciſes, and obſtructs the way and motion of the ſpirit of God in the ſoul: therefore if you would be ſpiritual, healthful, and vigorous, and enjoy much of the conſolation of heaven, be ſparing, and ſober in thoſe of the earth, and what you abate of the one ſhall be certainly made up in the other. Health, and a good conſtitution of body is a more conſtant remaining pleaſure then that of exceſs and momentany pleaſing of the palate, thus the comfort of this hope is a more refined, and more abiding contentment than any is in the paſſing enjoyments of this world, and 'tis a fooliſh bargain to exchange a drachme of the one for many pounds of the other. Conſider how preſſingly the Apoſtle *Saint Paul* reaſons. 1 *Cor.* 9. 25. And take withall our Saviours exhortation! *Be ſober and watch, for ye know not at what hour your Lord will come.*

The double minded man (ſayes S. *James*) *is unſtable in all his wayes*; although the word ſignifies uſually deceitfulneſs and diſſimulation of mind, anſwering to the *Hebrew* phraſe of *a heart and a heart*: Yet here I conceive it hath another ſenſe agreeable to the Apoſtles preſent diſcourſe and ſcope; 'tis doubtfulneſs, and unſetled wavering of mind.

'Tis impoſſible that the courſe of Life can be any other but uneven, and incompos'd, if the ſpring of it, the heart, whence are the iſſues of Life, be ſo, a Man that is not agreed within, not of one mind with himſelf, although there were nothing to trouble, nor alter him from without, that inward com-

motion

motion is a sufficient principle, and cause of inconstancy: How much more then must he waver, when he is assaulted, and beat upon by outward oppositions he is like the waves of the Sea, of himself ever fluctuating to and fro according to the Natural Instability of that Element: and then being expos'd to the tossings of all the waves that arise.

'Tis therefore in Religion a main thing to have the heart establish'd, and fixed in the belief, and hope of the great things we look for, this will beget strength of resolution, and constancy in action, and in suffering too. And this is here our Apostles great intent to ballast the souls of his Brethren with this firm belief, that they might sail even, and steady in those Seas of trouble. Wherefore (saves he) if these things we have spoken be thus, if there is indeed truth in them, and you believe it so, what remains then, but to resolve for it upon any terms, to fit for the journey whatsoever be the difficulties, and in them all to keep up the soul by that certain hope that will not disappoint us.

What he hath said before, is as it were showing them some fruits, some clusters of grapes of that promised Land, and this Exhortation is answerable to *Caleb's* word there *Num.* 13. *Seeing 'tis so good a Land, let us go up and possess it*, though there be fleshly objects, *Sons of Anak*, Giants of tentations and afflictions, and sins to be overcome ere it be ours, yet 'tis well worth all our labour, and our God hath ascertain'd us of the victory, and given us by his own word undoubted hope of possessing it.

That which he principally exhorts in this *Verse*, is the right placing and firm continuing of our hope.

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When we Conſider, how much of our Life is taken up this way, in hoping for things we have not, and that even they who have moſt of what others are deſiring and purſuing; yet are ſtill hoping for ſomewhat further, and when Men have attained one thing, though it be ſomething they promis'd themſelves to reſt contented withal, yet preſently upon obtaining it, Hope begins to find out ſome new matter for it ſelfe. I ſay conſidering the unceſſant working of this paſſion throughout our life, 'tis of very much concernment for us to give it a right object, and not ſtill to be living in vanity, and uncertainty. Here is then that for our hope to apply it ſelf to, after which it needs not change, nor can change without the greateſt loſs. *Hope for the Grace that is coming at the Revelation of Jeſus Chriſt*, beſtow all your hope on this, and recal it not. *Hope perfectly and to the end.*

The other part of the Exhortation relates to this as the main end, and in the Original runs in this form, *wherefore girding up the loines of your mind being ſober, hope*, and, to the end hope may be the more perfect, and endure to the end, and more like it ſelfe heavenly, your minds muſt be freed from the Earth, that they may ſet for heaven, and this is expreſſed in two ſeveral words but both meaning much the ſame thing; that temper of ſobriety, and poſture of being girt, are no other, but the ſame removal of earthly mindedneſs, and incumbring cares and deſires of earthly things.

Gird up the loynes] The cuſtom of thoſe Countries was, that wearing long garments they truſſed them up for work or journey. Chaſtity is indeed a Chriſtian

Christian grace, and a great part of the souls freedom and spiritualness, and fits it much for Divine things, yet I think it is not so particularly, and only intended in this expression, as St *Jerom* and others take it, for, though the girding of the loynes seem to them to favour that sense, 'tis only in allusion to the manner of girding up used, and besides the Apostle here makes it clear, he meant somewhat else; for he sayes, *the Loynes of your minds*, gather up your affections that they hang not down to hinder you in your Race, and so in your Hopes of obtaining, and do not only gather them up, but tye them up, that they fall not down again, or if they do, be sure to gird them straiter then before, thus be still as men for your journey, tending to another place. This is not our home, nor the place of our rest, therefore our loines must be still girt up, our affections kept from training and dragging down upon the Earth.

Men that are altogether earthly and profane, are so far from girding up the loines of their mind, that they set them whole downwards, the very highest part of their soul is glued to the Earth, and they are daily partakers of the Serpents curse, they go on their Belly, and eat the dust *they mind earthly things*. Now this disposition is inconsistent with Grace; but they that are in some measure truly godly, though they grovel not so, yet may be somewhat guilty of suffering their affections to fall too low, that is, too much conversant with vanity, and further engaged than is meet to some things that are worldly, and by this means abate of their heavenly hopes, and make them less perfect, less clear and sensible to their souls.

And

And becauſe they are moſt ſubject to take this Liberty in the fair and calm weather of porſperity, God doth often, and wiſely, and mercifully cauſe rough blaſts of affl ction to ariſe upon them to make them gather their looſe garments nearer to them and gird them cloſer.

Let us then remember our way, and where we are, and keep our garments girt up, for we walk amidſt thornes and briers, that, if we let them down, will entangle and ſtop us, and poſſibly tear our garments, we walk through a world where there is much mire of ſinfull poſſutions, and therefore cannot but defile them, and the croud we are among will be ready to tread on them, yea our own feet may be entangled in them, and ſo make us ſtumble, and poſſibly fall. Our onely ſafeſt way is to gird up our affections wholly.

This perfect hope is inforced by the whole ſtrain of it: for well may we fixe our Hope on that happineſs to which we are appointed in the Eternall Election of God. *Ver.* 2. and born to it by our new birth. *Ver.* 3, 4. and preſerv'd to it by his almighty power. *Ver.* 5. and cannot be cut ſhort of it by all the afflictons and oppoſitions in the way, no nor ſo much as depriv'd by them of our preſent Joy, and comfort in the aſſurance of it. *Ver.* 6, 7, 8, 9. And then being taught the Greatneſs and Excellency of that bleſſed Salvation by the doctrine of the prophets, and Apoſtles, and the admiration of Angels, all theſe conſpire to confirme our Hope, to make it perfect, and perſevering to the End.

And we may alſo Learn by the foregoing doctrine that this is the place of our triall and conflict, but

the place of our rest is above, we must here have *our Loynes girt*, but when we come there, we may wear our long white Robes at their full length without disturbance, for there is nothing there, but peace and without danger of defilement, for *no unclean thing is there*, yea the streets of that new Jerusalem are pav'd with pure gold, to him then that hath prepared that City for us let us ever give praise.

Verses. 14. 15, 16.

Verses, 14. *As obedient Children not fashioning your selves according to the former Lusts, in your Ignorance.*

Verse. 15. *But as he who hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of Conversation.*

Verse 16. *Because it is written, be ye holy for I am holy.*

THy word is a Lamp unto my feet, says *David*, *and a Light unto my paths*, not onely comfortable as Light is to the eyes, but withall directive, as a Lamp to his feet. Thus here the Apostle doth not onely furnish consolation against distress, but Exhorts and directs his Brethen in the way of Holiness, without which the apprehension, and feeling, of those comforts cannot subsist,

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This is no other but a clearer and fuller expreſſion, and further preſſing of that ſobriety, and ſpiritualneſs of mind, and life that he joyntly exhorted unto with that of perfect hope, *ver.* 13. as inſeparably connext with it; if you would enjoy this Hope be not conform to the luſt of your former ignorance, but be holy.

There is no doctrine in the world either ſo pleaſant, or ſo pure, as that of Chriſtianity. 'Tis matchleſs, both in ſweetneſs, and holineſs. The Faith, and Hope of a Chriſtia in have in them an abiding precious balm of comfort, but this is never to be ſo laviſh'd away, as to be poured into the puddle of an impure Conſcience. No, that were to loſe it unworthily, *As many as have this hope purify themſelves, even as he is pure*, 1. *Joh.* 3, 3. Here they are commanded to *be holy as he is holy*, *Act.* 15. Faith firſt purifies the heart, Empties it of the love of ſin, and then fills it with the Conſolation of Chriſt, and hope of Glory.

'Tis a fooliſh miſgrounded fear, and ſuch as argues inexperience of the nature, and workings of divine Grace, to imagine that the aſſured hope of ſalvation will beget unholineſs and preſumptuous boldneſs in ſin, and therefore that the doctrine of that aſſurance is a doctrine of Licentiouſneſs. Our Apoſtle, we ſee is not ſo ſharp ſighted as theſe men think themſeves, he apprehends no ſuch matter, but indeed ſuppoſes the contrary as unqueſtionable he takes not aſſured hope, and holineſs as Enemies, but joynes them as neareſt friends, *hope perfectly* and *be holy*.

They are mutually ſtrengthened, and increaſ'd each

by the other, the more assurance of salvation, the more holiness, the more delight in it, and study of it as the onely way to that End, and as labour is then most pleasant when we are made sureſt it shall not be lost, nothing doth make the soul so nimble, and active in obedience as this *eyle of gladness*, this assured hope of glory. Again the more holiness is in the soul, the clearer always is this assurance, as we see the face of the heavens best, when there are fewest clouds. The greatest affliction doth not damp this hope so much, as the smallest sin; yea, it may be the more lively and sensible to the soul by affliction, but by sin it always suffers loss as the Experience of all Christians does certainly teach them.

The Apostle exhorts to Obedience, and enforceth it by a most persuasive Reason. His exhortation is 1. Negative, *not fashioning your selves.* 2. Positive, *Be ye holy.*

That which he would remove and separate them from is *Lusts*, This is in Scripture the usuall name of all the irregular, and sinfull desires of the heart, both the polluted habits of them, and their corrupt streams, both as they are within, and outwardly vent themselves in the Lives of Men. The Apostle St. *John* (1 *Joh.* 2, 17.) calls it the *Lust of the world*, and *Verse* 15. *love of the world.* And then *Verse*, 16. Branches it into those three, that are indeed the base Anti-trinity that the world worships, the *lust of the eyes*, the *lust of the flesh*, and *the pride of Life.*

The soul of Man unconverted, is no other but a den of impure Lusts, wherein dwells, pride, Uncleanness Avarice, Malice *&c*, just as *Babylon* is described. *Revelation.* 18. 2. or as *Isa.* 13. 21. Were

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a Man's eyes opened he would as much abhorre to remaine with himself in that condition, as to dwell in a house full of Snakes, and Serpents as S. *Austin* says, and the first part of conversion is once to rid the soul of these noysome Inhabitants, for there is none at all found naturally vacant and free from them; thus the Apostle here expresses it of the believers he wrote to, that these lusts were theirs before *in their Ignorance.*

There is a truth in it, that all sin arises from some kind of Ignorance, or at least, from present Inadvertence, and Inconsideration, turning away the mind from the light, which therefore, for the time, is as if it were not, and is all one with Ignorance in the effect, and therefore the works of sin are all called works of darkness; for were the true visage of sin seen at a full light, undress'd, and unpainted, it were impossible while it so appear'd, that any one soul could be in love with it, but would rather flye it as hideous, and abominable; but because the soul unrenewed is all darkness, therefore it is all lust, and love of sin, no order in it, because no light, as at the first in the world, confusion and darkness went together, and *darkness was upon the face of the deep*, 'tis so in the soul, the more Ignorance the more abundance of Lusts.

That light that frees the soul and rescues it from the very kingdome of darkness must be somewhat beyond that which nature can attaine to; all the light of Philosophy, naturall, and morall is not sufficient, yea, the very knowledge of the Law sever'd from Christ, serves not so to enlighten, and renew the soul, as to free it from the darkness or Ignorance

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here ſpoke of; for our Apoſtle writes to Jews, that knew the Law, and were inſtructed in it before their converſion, yet he calls thoſe times wherein Chriſt was unknown to them the *times of their Ignorance*, though the ſtars ſhine never ſo bright, and the moon with them in its full, yet they do not all together make it day, ſtill 'tis night till the ſun appear. Therefore the Hebrew doctors upon that word of *Solomons*, *Vanity of vanities all is vanity*, ſay, *vana etiam Lex, donec venerit Meſſias.* Therefore of him *Zacharias* ſayes, *that the day ſpring from on high hath viſited us to give light to them that ſit in darkneſs and in the ſhadow of death, and to guide our feet into the way of peace.*

A naturall Man may attaine to very much acquir'd knowledge of the doctine of Chriſt, and may diſcourſe excellently of it, and yet ſtill his ſoul be in the chains of darkneſs, faſt lockt up under the Ignorance here mention'd, and ſo ſtill of a carnal mind in ſubjection to theſe luſts of Ignorance.

The ſaving light of faith is a beam of the ſun of Righteouſneſs himſelf, that he ſends into the ſoul, by which he makes it diſcern his incomparable beauties, and by that ſight alienates it from all thoſe luſts, and deſires that do then appear to be what indeed they are, vileneſs, and filthineſs it ſelf, makes the ſoul wonder at it ſelf, how it could love ſuch baſe traſh ſo long, and ſo fully reſolves it now, on the choyce of Jeſus Chriſt the cheif among ten thouſands, yea, the faireſt of the Children of men, for that he is withall the onely begotten Son of God, *the brightneſs of his fathers glory and the expreſs image of his Perſon. Heb.* 1. 3.

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The ſoul once acquainted with him, can with diſdain turn off all the baſe ſollicitations, and importunities of ſin, and command them away, that formerly had command over it, though they plead former familiarities, and the intereſt they once had in the heart of a Chriſtian before it was enlightned, and renewed. He can well tell them after his ſight of Chriſt, that it is true, while he knew no better then they were, he thought them lovely and pleaſing, but that one glance of the face of Jeſus Chriſt, hath turn'd them all into extream blackneſs, and deformity, that ſo ſoon as ever Chriſt appear'd to him, they ſtraightway loſt all their credit, and eſteem in his heart, and have loſt it for ever, they need never look to recover it any more.

And 'its from this, that the Apoſtle enforceth this dehortation, 'its true the luſts, and vanities that are in requeſt in the world were ſo with you, but 'twas when you were blind, they were the luſts of your Ignorance, but now you know how ill they will ſuite with the light of that Goſpel which you profeſs, and that inward light of faith which is in the ſouls of ſuch as be really believers.

Therefore ſeeing you have renounc'd them, keep them ſtill at that diſtance, do not ever admitt them more to lodge within you, that ſure you cannot do, but do not ſo much as for cuſtom ſake, and compliance with the world about you, outwardly conform your ſelves to any of them, or make ſemblance to partake of them as S. *Paul* ſayes, *have no more fellowſhip with the unfruitfull works of darkneſs; but rather reprove them*, reprove them by your carriage, and let the light of your holy lives diſcover their foulneſs,

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2. Positive, *Be yea holy.* This includes the former, the renouncing of the lusts, and pollutions of the world, both in heart, and life; and addes farther, filling of their room being cast out, with the beautifying graces of the spirit of God, and the acting of those in their whole conversation in private, and abroad, in conversing with themselves, and conversing with others, whether good or bad, in a constant even course, still like themselves, and like him who hath called them, for 'tis a most unseemly, and unpleasant thing to see a Man's life full of ups and downs, one step like a Christian, and another like a wordling, it cannot chuse but both pain himself & disedifie others.

But as he that calleth you is holy, Consider whose you are, and you cannot deny, that it becomes you to be holy, your near Relation to the holy God, this is expres'd two wayes, namely, *As children, and as he which hath called you.* Which is all one as if he had said, hath begotten you again, the very outward vocation of those that profess Christ, presseth holiness upon them, but the inward far more, you were running to destruction in the way of sin, and there was a voyce together with the Gospel preached to your ear that spake into your heart and call'd you back from that path of death, to the way of holiness, which is the onely way of life. He hath sever'd you from the mass of the perfane world, and pickt you out to be jewels for himself, he hath set you apart for this end, that you may be holy to him, as the *Hebrew* Word that signifies holiness is from seting apart, or fitting for a peculiar use, be not then untrue to his designe, *he hath not called you to uncleanness, but unto holiness. Thes.* 4. Therefore be

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ye holy, 'tis ſacrilege for you to diſpoſe of your ſelves, after the impure manner of the world, and to apply your ſelves to any profane uſe, whom God hath conſecrated to himſelf.

As children] This is no doubt relative to that which he ſpoke, *Verſe* 3. by way of thanksgiving, and that *Wherefore*, of the 13. *Verſe*, drawes it down hither by way of Exhortation. Seeing you are by a ſpiritual and new birth the Children of ſo great, and good a Father, he commands you holineſs, be obedient Children, in being holy, and ſeeing he himſelf is moſt holy, be like him as his Children, *be ye holy as he is holy.*

As obedient Children] Oppoſit to that *Eph.* 2. *Sons of diſobedience*, or *unbelief*, as the word may be rendered, and that is alwayes the ſpring of diſobedience. Sons of miſperſwaſibleneſs, that will not be drawn, and perſwaded by the tendereſt mercies of God. Now though this *Hebrew* manner of ſpeech *Sons of obedience and diſobedience* ſignifie no more but obedient or diſobedient Perſons, yet it doth ſignifie it moſt emphatically and means a high degree of obedience, or diſobedience, theſe Sons of diſobedience, *Verſe* 2. are likewiſe Sons of wrath, *Verſe* 3.

Of all Children the Children of God are moſt obliged to Obedience, for he is both the wiſeſt, and the lovingeſt of fathers. And the ſumme of all his Commands is that which is their glory and happineſs, that they endeavour to be like him, to reſemble their heavenly father, *be ye perfect as your heavenly father is perfect*, ſayes our Saviour. And here the Apoſtle citing out of the Law, *be ye holy for I*

am holy. Levit. 11. 44. Law and Gospel agree in this. And as Children that resemble their Father, as they grow up in years, they grow the liker to them, thus the Children of God do increase in their resemblance, and are daily more and more renew'd after his Image. There is in them an inhere likeness by his Image impress'd on them in their first renovation, and his spirit dwelling within them, and there is a continuing increase of it, by their pious imitation, and study of conformity which is here exhorted to.

The imitation of vitious Men, and the corrupt world is here forbid, the imitation of Mens indifferent customes is base and servile, the imitation of the vertues of good Men is commendable: but the imitation of this highest pattern this Primitive goodness the most holy God, is the top of Excellency. And 'tis well said: *Summa Religionis est imitari quem colis.* All of us offer him some kind of worship, but few seriously study, and endeavour this blessed conformity.

There is no question among those that professe themselves the People of God, a select number, that are indeed his children, and bear his Image both in their hearts and in their lives, this Impression of holiness is on themselves, and their conversation; but with the most, a name and a form of godliness is all they have for Religion. Alas! We speak of holiness, and we hear of it, and it may be we commend it, but we act it not, or if we do, 'tis but acting of it, in that sense the word is taken, for a personated acting, as on a stage in the sight of Men, not as in the sight of our lovely God, lodg-

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ing it in our hearts, and from thence diffusing it into all our actions. A child is then truly like his father, when not only his visage resembles him, but more his mind and inward disposition. Thus are the true children of God, like their heavenly father in their words, and in their actions; but most of all in heart.

'Tis no matter though the profane world (that so hate God that it cannot indure his Image) do mock and revile, 'tis thy honour as *David* said to be thus more vile, in growing still more like unto him in holiness, and though the civil Man count thy fashion a little odd, and too precise, 'tis because he knows nothing above that model of goodness he hath set himself, and therefore approves of nothing beyond it, he knowes not God, and therefore doth not discern, and esteem what is likest him. When Courtiers come down into the Country, the common homebred People possibly think their habit strange, but they care not for that, 'tis the fashion at Court. What need then the Godly be so tender foreheaded, as to be out of countenance because the world lookes on holiness as a singularity. 'tis the only fashion in the highest Court, yea, of the King of Kings himself.

For I am holy] As it will raise our endeavour high to look on the highest pattern, so it will lay our thoughts low concerning our selves: Men compare themselves with Men, and readily with the worst, and flatter themselves with that comparative betterness; this is not the way to see our spots, to look into the muddy streams of profane Mens lives; but look into the clear fountain of the Word, and

there we may both discern and wash them, and consider the infinite holiness of God, and this will humble us to the dust, when *Isaiah*, saw the glory of the Lord, and heard the Seraphims cry, *holy, holy, holy*, he cried out of his own and the Peoples unholiness. *Woe is me for I am undone, for I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a People of unclean lips; for mine eyes have seen the King the Lord of Hosts.*

Verse 17.

And if ye call on the Father, who without respect of persons judgeth according to every mans work, pass the time of your sojurning here in Fear.

THe tentations that meet a Christian in the world to turn him aside from the straight way of obedience and holiness, are either such as present the hope of some apparent good, to draw him from that way; or the fear of some evil to drive and affright him from it: And therefore the word of God is much in strengthning the Christian mind against these two, and it doth it mainly by possessing it, both with hopes, and fears of a higher nature, that do by far weigh down the other.

The frequentest assaults of tentation are upon these two passions of the mind, therefore they are mainly to be fortified and defended by a hope and fear opposit to those that do assault us, and sufficiently strong to resist and repel them.

These two therefore our Apostle here exhorts. 1. The hope of that glory that the Gospel propounds, and

and so outbids all the proffers of the World, both in the greatness, and the certainty of its promises. 2. The fear of God, the greatest and justest judge, only worthy to be fear'd and reverenc'd; the highest anger and enmity of all the world being less than nothing in comparison of his smallest displeasure. There is here,

1. This fear. 2. The reason enforcing it. 3. The The term or continuance of it.

In fear,] But how suites this with the high discourse that went before of perfect assured hope? of faith and Love, and Joy, yea, Joy unspeakable, and glorious, arising out of these: How are all those excellencies fallen as it were into a dungeon? when fear is mention'd after them, doth not the Apostle St. *John* say that *true love casteth out fear*, and is it not more clearly opposite to perfect or assured hope and to faith and joy?

If ye understand it aright, this is such a fear as doth not prejudge, but preserve those other graces and the comfort and joy that arises from them. And they all agree so well with it, that they are naturally helps each to other.

It were superfluous to insist on the defining this passion of fear, and the manifold distinctions of it, either with Philosophers or Divines. The fear here recommended is out of question, a holy self suspicion and fear of offending God, which may not only consist with assured hope of salvation, and with faith, and love, and spiritual joy, but is their inseparable companion as all Divine Graces are linkt together, as they said of their three graces, and as they dwell together they grow or decrease together.

ther. The more a Christian believes, and loves, and rejoyces in the love of God, the more unwilling sure to displease him, and if in danger the more afraid of it; and on the other side this fear being the true principle of a wary and holy Conversation, flying sin, and the occasions and tentations of sin, and resisting them when they set on, is as a watch or guard, that keeps out the Enemies, and disturbers of the soul, and so preserves its inward peace, keeps the assurance of faith and hope unmolested, and that joy which they causes, and the intercourse and societies of love betwixt the soul and her beloved uninterrupted: all which are then most in danger when this fear abates, and falls to slumbring; for then readily some notable sin or other breaks in, puts all into disorder; and for a time makes those graces and the comfort of them to present feeling, as much to seek, as if they were not there at all.

No wonder then if the Apostle having stirr'd up his Christian Brethren, whatsoever be their estate in the World, to seek to be rich in those Jewels of faith, and hope, and love, and spiritual joy, and then considering that they travel amongst a world of Thieves and Robbers (no wonder I say) that he addes this, advises them to give those their jewels in custody, under God, to this trusty and watchful grace of godly fear; and having earnestly exhorted them to holiness, he is very fitly particular in this fear, which makes up so great a part of that holiness, that is often in Scripture nam'd for it all.

Solomon calls it the beginning, or the top of wisdom; the word signifies both, and it is both. The beginning

beginning of it is the beginning of wisdom, and the progress and increase of it, is the increase of wisdom That hardy rashness that many account valour is the companion of ignorance, and of all rashness boldness to sin, is the most witless and foolish. There is in this as in all fear an apprehension of an evil, whereof we are in danger. The evil is sin, and the displeasure of God and punishing following upon sin. The God-Man judgeth wisely as the truth is, that sin is the greatest of evils and the cause of all other evils, 'tis a transgression of the just Law of God, and a provocation of his just anger, and the cause of those punishments temporal and spiritual and Eternal which he inflicts. And then considering how mighty he is to punish, both the power and reach of his hand, that it is both most heavy and unavoidable. All these things may and should concurre to the working of this fear.

There is (no doubt) a great difference betwixt those two kinds of fear that are usually differenced by the name of servile and filial fear, but certainly the most genuine fear of the Sons of God, that call him father, doth not exclude the consideration of his justice, and of the punishment of sin that his justice inflicts; we see here his word as the great motive of this fear, that he judgeth every Man according to his workes. And *David* in that *Psalm* wherein he so much breaths forth those other sweet affections of love, and hope, and delight in God, and in his Word, yet expresseth this fear even of the justice of God. *My flesh trembleth for fear of thee, and I am afraid of thy judgements.* *Psal.* 119. 120. The flesh is to be awed with divine judgements,

ments, though the higher and surer part of the soul is strongly and freely ty'd with the cords of Love, temporal corrections indeed they fear not so much in themselves, as that Impression of wrath that may be upon them for their sins. *Psal. 6. 1 &c.* That is the main matter of their fear, because their happiness is in his Love and the light of his countenance, that's their life, they regard not how the world lookes upon them, care not who frown so he smile on them, and because no other enemy nor evil in the world can prejudge them in this but their own sin, therefore it is that they fear most.

As the evil is great, so the Christian hath great reason to fear in regard of his danger of it, considering the multitude, and strength, and craft of his enemies, and his own weakness and unskilfulness to resist them, and his sad experience in being often foyled, teacheth him that it is thus; he cannot be ignorant of it, he finds how often his own resolves and purposes deceive him. Certainly a godly Man is sometimes driven to wonder at his own frailty and unconstancy, what strange differences will be, betwixt him and himselfe, how high and how delightful at sometimes are his thoughts of God, and the glory of the life to come, and yet how easily at another time, base tentations will bemire him, or at the least molest and vex him, and this keeps him in a continual fear, and that fear is continual vigilancy and circumspectness. When he looks up to God and considers the truth of his Promises, and the sufficiency of his grace and protection, and the Almighty strength of his Redeemer, these things fill his soul with confidence and assurance; But when he

he turnes his eye downward again upon himself, and finds so much remaining corruption within, and so many tentations and dangers and adversaries without, this forces him not onely to fear but to despair of himself; and it should doe so, that his trust in God may be the purer and more entire. That confidence in God will not make him secure and presumptuous in himself, nor that fear of himself make him diffident of God. This fear is not opposite to faith but high-mindedness and presumption is, *Rom.* 11. 20. To a naturall mind it would seem an odd kind of reasoning that of the Apostle *Phil.* 2. 12. 13. *For God that worketh in you both will and to do of his good pleasure.* Therefore (would he think) you may have a labour you may sit still, and not work; or if you work you may work fearlesly, being so sure of his help, but the Apostle is of another mind, his inference is therefore *work out your own salvation* and work it *with fear and trembling.*

But he that hath assurance of Salvation why should he fear, if there is truth in his assurance nothing can disappoint him, not sin it self; 'tis true, but it is no less true, that if he do not fear to sin, there is no truth in his assurance; 'tis not the assurance of faith, but the misperswasion of a secure and profane mind. 2. Suppose it so, that the sins of a godly Man cannot be such as to cut him short of that salvation whereof he is assur'd, yet they may be such as for a time will deprive him of that assurance, and not onely remove the comfort he hath in that, but let in horrours, and anguish of conscience in its stead; though a Believer is freed from hell (and we may overstrain this assurance in our doctrine, beyond what the soberest

and devouteſt Men in the world can ever find in themſelves, though they will not trouble themſelves to conteſt and diſpute with them that ſay they have it) ſo that his ſoul cannot come there, yet ſome ſins may bring as it were a piece of hell into his ſoul for a time, and this is reaſon enough for any Chriſtian in his right wits to be affraid of ſin. No man would willingly hazard himſelf upon a fall that may break his leg, or ſome other bone, though he could be made ſure, both that he ſhould not break his neck, or that his life were not at all in danger, and that he ſhould be perfectly cur'd; yet the pain, and trouble of ſuch a hurt would ſcare him, and make him warry and fearfull when he walks in danger. The broken bones that *David* complains of after his fall, may work fear and warrineſs in theſe that hear him, though they were aſcertain'd of a like recovery.

This fear is not cowardiſe, it doth not debaſe, but Elevates the mind, for it drownes all lower fears, and begets true fortitude, and courage to encounter all dangers, for a good Conſcience, and the obeying of God. *The Righteous is bold as a Lyon*, he dares doe any thing, but offend God; and to dare that is the greateſt folly, and baſeneſs, and weakneſs in the world. From this fear have ſprung all the generous Reſolutions, and patient ſufferings of the Saints, and Martyrs of God, becauſe they durſt not ſin againſt him; therefore they durſt be impriſon'd, and impoveriſh'd, and tortur'd, and dye for him. Thus the Prophet Iſay ſets carnall, and godly fear as oppoſite, and the one expelling the other. *Iſa.* 8. 12. 13. And our Saviour, *Luke* 12. 4. *Fear not them that kill the body: but fear him which after he hath kill'd hath*

hath power to cast into hell. yea, I say unto you, fear him. fear not, but fear, and therefore fear, that you may not fear. This fear is like the trembling that hath been observed in some great Courages before their battels, *Moses* was bold, and fearless in dealing with a proud and wicked King, but when God appeared he said, sayes the Apostle, *I exceedingly fear, and quake. Heb.* 12. 21.

The Reason that we have here to perswade this Fear, is twofold. 1. Their Relation to God. 2. Their Relation to the world.

First. To God as their Father, as their Judge, because you do call him father, and profess your selves his Children, begotten again by him (for this looks back to that) it becomes you as obedient Children to stand in awe, and fear to offend him your father, and a father so full of Goodness, and tender love, but as he is the best father, so consider, that he is withall, the greatest, and justest judge, *Judges according to every mans work.*

God allwayes sees, and discerns Men, and all their work, and *judgeth*, that is, accounteth of them as they are, and sometimes in this life declares, this his judgement of them to their own Consciences, and in some to the view of others, in visible punishments, and rewards: but the most solemn judgement of all is reserv'd to that Great day which he hath appointed *Wherein he will judge the world in righteousness by his son Jesus. Act.* 17. 30.

There is here, The Soveraignty of this judge, the universality of his Judgement, and the Equity of it. all must answer at his great Court, he is supreme Judge of the world, he made it, and hath therefore

unquestionable right to judge it, *he judgeth every-man*; and 'tis a most righteous Judgement, which hath these two in it. First, an exact and perfect knowledge of all Mens works. 2. impartiall judgement of them so known. This Second is expressd negatively, by removing the crooked Rule which mans judgement often follows, its without Consideration of those personall differences that men eye so much. And the first is according to the work it self. *Job.* 34. 19. *He accepteth not the person of princes, nor regardeth the rich more than the poor*, and the reason is added, *therefore they are all the work of his hands.* He made all the persons, and he makes all those differences himself as it pleaseth him, therefore he doth not admire them as we do, no, nor at all regard them: we find very great odds betwixt stately palaces, and poor Cottages, betwixt a Princes Robes, and a Beggars Cloak; but to God, they are all one, all these petty differences vanish in Comparison of his own greatness: Men are great, and small compar'd one with another, but they all together amount to just nothing in respect of him: We find high mountains and low valleys on this Earth, but compar'd with the vast compass of the heavens, 'tis all but as a point, and hath no sensible greatness at all.

Nor regards he any other differences to byasse his Judgement, from the works of men, to their persons. You profess the true Religion, and call him Father; but if you live devoid of his fear, and be disobedient Children, he will not spare you because of that Relation, but rather punish you the more severely, because you pretended to be his Children, and yet

obeyed

obeyed him not, therefore you shall find him your Judge and an impartiall Judge of your works. Remember therefore that your father is this Judge, and fear to offend him: But then indeed a Believer may look back to the other for comfort, that abuses it not to a sinfull security. He resolves thus willingly, I will not sin, because my father is this just Judge; but for my frailties I will hope for mercy, because the Judge is my father.

Their works, comprehends all actions, and words; yea, thoughts, and each work intirely taken outside and inside together, for he sees all alike and judgeth according to all together, he looks on the wheels, and paces within, as well as on the handle without, and therefore ought we to fear the least crookedness of our intentions in the best works; for if we entertain any such, and study not singleness of heart this will cast all, though we pray, and hear the word, and preach it, and live outwardly unblameably. And in that great Judgement, all secret things shall be manifest; as they are alwayes open to the eye of this Judge, so he shall then open them before Men, and Angels: therefore let the Remembrance, and frequent Consideration of this all-seeing Judge, and of that great Judgement wean our hearts, and beget in us this fear. 2 *Cor.* 5. 10. 11. If you would have confidence in that day, and not fear it when it comes, fear it now, so as to avoid sin, for they that now tremble at it, shall then, when it comes, lift up their faces with joy, and they that will not fear it now, shall then be overwhelm'd with fears, and terrour, they shall have such a burden of fear then, as that they shall account the hills and mountains lighter than it.

pas-

Paſs the time of your Sojourning here in Fear, In this I conceive is Implied another perſuaſive of this fear. You are Sojurners, and Strangers, as here the word ſignifies, and a warry circumſpect carriage becomes ſtrangers, becauſe they are moſt expos'd to wrongs and hard accidents: You are encompaſſed with enemies and ſnares, how can you be ſecure in the midſt of them? this is not your reſt, watchfull fear becomes this your ſojurning. Perfect peace, and ſecurity is reſerved for you at home, and that's the laſt term of this fear, it continues all the time of this ſojurning life, dyes not before us, we and it ſhall expire together.

Bleſſed is he that feareth always ſays *Salomon*, in ſecret, and in ſociety, in his own houſe, and in Gods, we muſt hear the word with fear, and preach it with fear, affraid to miſcarry in our Intentions, and Manners. *Serve the Lord with fear*: yea, in times of inward comfort, and joy; yet, *rejoyce with trembling. Pſa.* 2. 11. Not onely when he feels moſt his own weakneſs, but when he finds himſelf ſtrongeſt: None ſo high advanc'd in Grace here below, as to be out of need of this Grace; but when their ſojourning ſhall be done, and they are come home to their fathers houſe above, then no more fearing. No entry for dangers, there and therefore no fear: A holy Reverence of the Majeſty of God they ſhall indeed have then moſt of all, as the Angels ſtill have, becauſe they ſhall ſee him moſt clearly, and the more he is known, the more Reverenc'd; but this Fear that relates to danger ſhall then vaniſh; For there, there is neither ſin, nor ſorrow for ſin, nor tentation to ſin, no more Conflicts; but after a full, and finall

finall victory an Eternall peace an Everlasting Triumph. Not onely fear; but faith and hope do imply some Imperfection not consistent with that blessed Estate, and therefore all of them having obtained their End, shall end; Faith in sight, and Hope in possession, and fear in perfect safety, and Everlasting Love and delight shall fill the whole soul in the vision of God.

Verse. 18.

For as much as ye know, that ye were not Redeemed with corruptible things, as Silver, and Gold, from your vain Conversation received by tradition from your fathers.

IT is Impossible for a Christian to give himself to conforme with the world's ungodlinesse, unless first, he forget who he is, and by what means he attain'd to be what he is; therefore the Apostle perswading his Brethren to holiness, puts them in mind of this, as the strongest incentive; not onely have you the Example of God set before you as your father, to beget in you the love of holiness, being your liveliest resemblance of him; and the justice of God as your Judge, to argue you into a pious fear of offending him; but Consider this, that he is your Redeemer, he hath bought out your liberty from sin, and the world to be altogether his, and think on the price laid down in this Ransome, and these out of question will prevaile with you.

We

We have here The evil dissuaded from, *viz. A vain Conversation*, 2. the dissuasion it self. 1. 'tis called *their vain Conversation*. 2. *Receiv'd by tradition from their fathers*. By this I conceive, is not onely understood the superstitions, and vain devices in Religion, that abounded amongst the Jews by tradition, of which our Saviour often reproved them while he was conversant amongst them, as we find in the Gospel, and all this was mean't, *Verse*, 14. by *the Lusts of their former ignorance*: but generally all the corrupt, and sinfull customes of their lives: for it seems not so pertinent to his purpose exhorting to Holiness of life, to speak of their superstitious traditions as their other sinfull habitudes, which are no less hereditary, and by the power of Example traditionall; which by reason of their common Root in Mans sinfull nature, do so easily pass from parents to Children, Nature making their Example powerfull, and the Corruption of Nature giving it most power in that which is Evill. And this is the rather mention'd to take away the force of it, and cut of that influence which it might have had into their minds, there is a kind of Conversation that the authority of your fathers pleads for, but Remember, that it is that very thing from which you are delivered, and called to a new estate and form of life, and have a new patterne set before you instead of that corrupt Example.

'Tis one great Errour, not onely in Religion and manners, but even in humane science, that Men are ready to take things upon trust unexamin'd, from those that went before them, partly out of easinesse, and sparing the paines of triall, partly out of a superstitious overesteem of their Authority: but the

chief

chief Reason why corruptions in Religion, and practice of preceeding ages, take so much with posterity, is that before mention'd, the universal sympathy, and agreement that those evils have with the corrupt Nature of Man,

The Prophet *Ezekiel* observes this particularly in the Jewes, *Chap.* 20. *Verse* 24. *That their eyes were after their Fathers Idols*, Contrary to Gods express forewarning, *Verse* 18. This was the great quarrel of the Heathens against the Christian Religion in the Primitive times, that it was new, and unknown to their Fathers, and the ancient Writers of those times are frequent in shewing the vanity of this exception, particularly *Lactantius*, *Instit. lib.* 2. *cap.* 7, 8. The same prejudice doth the Church of *Rome* sing over continually against the Reform'd Religion, where was it before *Luther*, *&c.* But this is a foolish and reasonless diversion from the search of Truth, because Errour is more at hand, or from the entertaining it being found, because falshood is in possession.

As in Religion, so in the course and practise of Mens lives, the stream of sin runs from one age into another, and every age makes it greater, adding somewhat to what it receives, as Rivers grow in their course, by the accession of Brookes that fall into them, and every Man when he is born falls like a drop into this main current of Corruption, and so is carried with it down, and this by reason of its strength, and his own nature which willingly dissolves into it, and runs along with it. In this is manifest the power of Divine Grace in a Mans Conversion, that it severs him so powerfully from the

prophane World; and gives him strength to run contrary to the great current of wickedness, that is round about him, in his Parents possibly, and in his Kindred, and Friends, and in the most of Men that he meets withal. The voice of God, that powerfully works this Effectual calling that he speaks in to the heart, makes a Man break through all, and leave all to follow God, as *Abraham* did, being called out from his kindred and Fathers house, to journey towards the Land that God had promis'd him. And this is that which is spoke to the Church, and to each believing soul by the spirit of God, *Forget also thine own People and thy Father's house so shall the King greatly delight in thy beauty*, regard not what others think, though thy nearest friends, but study only to please him, and then thou shalt please him indeed, do not deform thy face with looking out and squinting to the custom of the World, but look straight forward on him, and so thou shalt be beautiful in his eyes. When God calls a Man in a remarkable manner, his prophane Friends are all in a tumult, what needs this, to be more precise than we, and all your Neighbours? But all this is a confused noise, that works nothing on the heart that the Lord hath touched; it must follow him, though by trampling upon friends, and kindred if they lye in the way. We see how powerfully a word from Christ drew his Disciples to leave all and follow him.

The *Exhortation* is against all sinful and unholy conversation, by what Authority, and Example soever recommended to us, the Apostles Reason in these words is strong, and pressing, there is

one express'd in the very Name he gives it, *its vain Conversation.*

The mind of Man the Guide, and source of his actions, while it is Estranged from God, is nothing but a forge of vanities; the Apostle St. Paul speaks this of the Gentiles, that *they became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkned,* Rom. 1. 21. Their great Naturalists and Philosophers not excepted, and the more they strove to play the wise men, the more they befool'd, themselves, thus likewise Eph. 4. 17. and thus the Lord complains by his Prophet of the extream folly of his People, Isay. 44. 20. and by Jeremy that *their hearts are lodges of vain thoughts,* and these are the true cause of a *vain Conversation.*

The whole course of a Mans life out of Christ, is nothing but a continual trading in Vanity, running a Circle of toyle and labour, and reaping no profit at all. This is the vanity of every natural Mans Conversation, that not only others are not benefited by it, but it is fruitless to himself, there arises to him no solid good out of it. That is most truly vain, that attains not its proper end? Now all a Mans endeavours aiming at his satisfaction, and Contentment, that Conversation that gives him nothing of that, but removes him further from it, is justly called *vain conversation. What fruit had ye* sayes the Apostle, *in those things whereof ye are now ashamed*; Either count that shame (that (at the best) growes out of them, their fruit, or confess they have none, therefore they are called *the unfruitful works of darkness.*

Let the Voluptuous Person say it out upon his

death-bed, what pleasure, or profit doth then abide with him of all his former sinful delights. Let him tell if there remain any thing of them all, but that, that he would gladly not have to remain, the sting of an accusing Conscience, which is as lasting as the delight of sin was short, and evanishing. Let the covetous, and ambitious, declare freely, even those of them that have prospered most in their pursuit of Riches, and Honour, what ease all their Possessions, or titles do then help them to, whether their pains are the less, because their Chests are full, or their Houses stately, or multitude of friends, and servants, waiting on them with Hat and Knee, and if all these things cannot ease the body, how much less can they quiet the mind. And therefore is it not true, that all pains in these things, and the uneven wayes into which they sometimes stept aside to serve those ends, and generally that all the wayes of sin, wherein they have wearied themselves, were vain Rollings, and tossings up and down, not tending to acertain Haven of peace and happiness, 'tis a lamentable thing to be deluded all a Life time with a false dream, *Isa.* 2, 8.

You that are going on in the common Road of sin, although many, and possibly your own Parents have trod it before you, and the greatest part of these you now know are in it with you and keep you Company in it; yet be perswaded to stop a little, and ask your selves, what it is you seek, or expect in the end of it, would it not grieve any labouring Man to work hard all the day, and have no wages to look for at night, 'tis a greater loss to wear out our whole life, and in the evening of our dayes

dayes find nothing, but anguish and vexation. Let us then think this, that so much of our life as is spent in the wayes of sin, is all lost fruitless and *vain Conversation.*

And in so far as the Apostle saye here, *You are redeemed from this Conversation*, this Imports it a servile slavish Condition, as the other word expresses it, to live fruitless. And this is the Madness of a sinner, that he fancies Liberty in that which is the basest thraldome, as those poor frentique Persons that are lying ragged, and bound in Chaines, yet Imagine that they are Kings, that their Irons are Chaines of gold, their rags Robes, and their filthy Lodge a Pallace. As 'tis misery to be liable to the sentence of death, so 'tis slavery to be subject to the dominion of sin, and he that is delivered from the one is likewise set free from the other. There is one Redemption from both. He that is redeem'd from destruction by the blood of Christ, is likewise redeem'd from that vain, and unholy Conversation that leads to it. So *Tit.* 2. 14. Our Redeemer was anointed for this purpose, not to free the Captives from the sentence of death, and yet leave them still in Prison, but *to proclaim liberty to them, and the opening of the Prison to those that are bound, Isa.* 61. 1.

You easily perswade your selves that Christ hath died for you, and Redeem'd you from Hell, but you Consider not, that if it be so, he hath likewise Redeem'd you from your vain Conversation, and hath set you free from the service of sin. Certainly while you find not that, you can have no assurance of the other, if the Chaines of sin continue still upon you, for any thing you can know, these Chaines do bind you

you over to the other Chaines of darkneſs, the Apoſtle ſpeaks of. Let us not delude our ſelves, if we find the love of ſin, and of the World work ſtronger in our hearts, than the love of Chriſt, we are not as yet partakers of his Redemption.

But if we have indeed laid hold upon him, as our Redeemer, then are we Redeem'd from the ſervice of ſin, not only from the groſſeſt Profaneſs, but even from all kind of fruitleſs, and *vain Converſation*. And therefore ought to ſtand faſt in that Liberty and not entangle our ſelves again to any of our former vanities.

Not redeemed with Corruptible things] From the high price of our Redemption the Apoſtle doth mainly inforce our Eſteem of it, and the preſervation of that liberty ſo dearly bought, and the avoiding all that unholineſs, and vain converſation, from which we are freed by that Redemption. 1. He expreſſeth it negatively, *not with corruptible things*, (Oh fooliſh we, that hunt them, as if they were Incorruptible, and Everlaſting treaſures) no, not the beſt of them, theſe that are in higheſt account with Men, *not with Silver and Gold*, theſe are not of any value at all towards the Ranſom of Souls, they cannot buy off the death of the Body, nor cannot purchaſe the continuance of temperal life, much leſs can they reach to the worth of Spiritual and Eternal life. The precious ſoul could not be redeem'd but by blood, and by no blood but that of this ſpotleſs Lamb Jeſus Chriſt, who is God equal with the Father. And therefore his Blood is called the blood of God. *Act.* 20. So that the Apoſtle may well call it here *precious*, exceeding the whole World,

and

and all things in it in vaine. Therefore fruſtrate not the ſufferings of Chriſt, if he ſhed his blood to Redeem you from ſin, be not falſe to his End.

As of a Lamb without blemiſh.] He is that great and everlaſting Sacrifice that gave value, and vertue to all the Sacrifices under the Law; their blood was of no worth to the purging away of ſin, but by Relation to his blood, and the Laws concerning the choyce of the Paſcall Lamb, or other Lambs for Sacrifice, were but obſcure and imperfect ſhadowes of his purity and perfections, who is the undefiled *Lamb of God that taketh away the ſins of the World.* A Lamb in meekneſs, and ſilence, *he opened not his mouth. Iſa.* 53. 7. And in purity, here, *without ſpot or blemiſh. My well beloved,* ſayes the Spouſe, *is white and ruddy,* white in ſpotleſs Innocency, and red in ſuffering a bloody death.

For as much as ye know] 'Tis that muſt make all this effectual, the right Knowledge, and due Conſideration of it: Ye do know it already, but I would have you know it better, more deeply and practically, turn it often over, be more in the ſtudy, and meditation of it, there is work enough in it ſtill for the diſcerningeſt mind, 'tis a myſtery ſo deep, that you ſhall never reach the bottom of it, and withall ſo uſeful, that you ſhall find alwayes new profit by it: Our folly is, we gape after new things and yet are in effect Ignorant of the things we think we know beſt, that learned Apoſtle that knew ſo much, and ſpake ſo many tongues, yet *I determined,* ſayes he, *to know nothing among you, ſave Jeſus Chriſt and him Crucified,* 1 *Cor.* 2. 2. And again he expreſſes this as the top of his Ambition,

that

that I may know him, and the power of his Resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death; That Conformity is this only knowledge. He that hath his lusts unmortified, and a heart unweaned from the World, though he know all the history of the death, and sufferings of Jesus Christ, and can discourse well of them, yet indeed he knows them not.

If you would increase much in holiness, and be strong against the Tentations of sin, this is the only art of it, view much, and so seek to know much of the death of Jesus Christ, Consider often at how high a rate we were redeem'd from sin, and provide this answer for all the enticements of sin, and the world; except you can offer my soul something beyond that price, that was given for it on the cross, I cannot hearken to you. Far be it from me (will a Christian say, that considers this Redemption) that ever I should prefer a base lust, or any thing in this World, or it all, to him that gave himselfe to death for me, and payed my Ransom with his blood: his matchless love hath freed me from the miserable Captivity of sin, and hath for ever fastened me to the sweet yoke of his Obedience. Let him alone to dwell and rule within me and let him never go forth from my heart, who for my sake refus'd to come down from the Cross.

Verſe. 20.

Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world; but was manifeſt in theſe laſt times for you.

OF all thoſe Conſiderations (and there are many) that may move Men to Obedience, there is none that perſuades both more ſweetly, and ſtrongly then the ſenſe of Gods goodneſs, and mercy towards Men, and amongſt all the Evidences of that, there is none like the ſending, and giving of his Son for Mans redemption, therefore the Apoſtle having mentioned that, inſiſts further in it, and in theſe words expreſſes the performance, and the Application of it.

1. The purpoſe, or *Decree foreknown*, but 'tis well rendred, *fore ordained*, for this knowing is Decreeing, and there is little either ſolid truth or profit in the diſtinguiſhing them.

We ſay uſually, that where there is little wiſdom there is much chance, and comparitively amongſt Men, ſome are far more foreſighted, and of further Reach then others, yet the wiſeſt, and moſt provident Men, both wanting skill to deſigne all things aright, and power to act as they contrive, meet with many unexpected Caſualties, and often Diſappointments in their undertakings, but with God, where both wiſdom, and power are infinite, there can be neither any Chance, nor Reſiſtance from without, nor

any Imperfection at all in the contrivance of things neither himself can give that cause to add or abate or alter any thing in the frame of his purposes. The modell of the whole world, and of all the course of time was with him one and the same from all Eternity, and whatsoever is brought to pass, is exactly answerable to that pattern, for with him *there is no change, nor shaddow of turning. Jam.* 1. 17. There is nothing dark to the father of lights, he sees at one view through all things, and all ages, from the beginning of time to the end of it, yea, from Eternity to Eternity. And this Incomprehensible wisdom is too wonderfull for us, we do but childishly stammer, when we offer to speak of it.

It is no wonder that Men beat their own braines, and knock their heads one against another, in the contest of their opinions to little purpose, in their severall Mouldings of Gods Decree. Is not this to cut, and square Gods thoughts to ours, and Examine his Soveraign purposes, by the low principles of Humane wisdom, how much more learned, then all such knowledge, is the Apostles Ignorance, when he crys out, *O the depth of the riches, both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgements, and his wayes past finding out, Rom.* 11. 33. Why then should any man debate what place, in the series of Gods decree, is to be assigned to this purpose of sending his son in the flesh, Let us rather (seeing it is manifest that, it was for the Redemption of lost Mankind) admire that same Love of God to mankind that appears in that purpose of our recovery by the word made flesh, that before Man had made himself miserable, yea, before either

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he or the World was made this thought of boundleſs love was in the boſome of God to ſend his ſon forth from thence, to bring fallen Man out of miſery and reſtore him to happineſs and to do this not onely by taking on his nature, but the curſe, to ſhift it off from us, that were ſunk under it, and to bear it himſelf, and by bearing it, to take it away, *he laid on him the iniquity of us all*, And to this he was appointed ſays the Apoſtle, *Heb.* 3, 2.

Before the foundation of the world] This we underſtand by Faith, that *the world was framed by the word of God*; Although the Learned probably think it evincible by humane Reaſon, yet ſome of thoſe that have gloried moſt in that, and are reputed generally maſters of Reaſon, have not ſeen it by that light, therefore, that we may have a divine belief of it, we muſt learn it from the word of God and be perſuaded of its truth by the ſpirit of God, that the whole world, and all things in it, were drawn out of Nothing by his almighty power, that is the onely Eternal, and increated being, and therefore the fountain and ſource of being to all things.

Foundation.] In this word is clear, the Reſemblance of the world to a building, and ſuch a building it is, as doth evidence the greatneſs of him that fram'd it, ſo ſpacious, Rich, and comely, ſo firm a foundation and rais'd to ſo high, and ſtately a roofe, and ſet it with variety of ſtars as with Jewels, therefore call'd, as ſome conceive it, *Pſa.* 8. *the work of his fingers*, to expreſs the curious artifice that appears in them. Though Naturaliſts can give the reaſon of the earth's ſtability from its heavineſs, which ſtayes it neceſſarily in the loweſt part of the world, yet,

that abates nothing our admiring the wiſdom, and power of God, in laying its foundation ſo, and eſtabliſhing it for it is his will that is the firſt cauſe of that its nature, and hath appointed that to be the property of its heavineſs to fix it there, and therefore *Job* alledeges this amongſt the wonderfull works of God, and evidences of his power that *he hangeth the earth upon nothing.*

Before there was Time, or place, or any Creature, God, the bleſſed Trinity, was in himſelfe (and as the Prophet ſpeaks) inhabiting Eternity, compleatly happy in himſelf; but intending to manifeſt, and communicate his goodneſs, he gave beginning to the world, and to time with it, made all to ſet forth his goodneſs, and the moſt excellent of his Creatures to contemplate, and enjoy it: But amongſt all the works that he intended before time, and in time effected, this is the maſter piece, that is here ſaid to be fore-ordained the manifeſting of God in the fleſh, for mans Redemption; and that by his ſon Jeſus Chriſt, as *the firſt born amonſt many brethren.* That thoſe appointed for ſalvation ſhould be reſcued from the common miſery, and be made one myſticall body whereof Chriſt is the head, and ſo entitled to that Everlaſting glory and happineſs that he hath purchas'd for them.

This, I ſay, is the great work, wherein all thoſe glorious attributes ſhine joyntly, the Wiſdom, and Power, and Goodneſs, and Juſtice, and Mercy of God; as in great Maps, or Pictures, you will ſee the border decor'd with Meadows, and fountains, and flowers *&c.* Repreſented in it; but in the middle you have the main deſigne, thus is this fore-

ordained

ordained Redemption amongſt the works of God, all his other works in the world, all the beauty of the Creatures, and the ſucceſſion of Ages, and things that come to paſs in them, are but as the border to this as the main piece: But as a fooliſh unskillfull beholder, not diſcerning the excellency of the principall piece in ſuch Maps, or Pictures gazes only on the fair border, and goes no further, thus do the greateſt part of us; our eyes are taken with the goodly ſhow of the world and appearance of earthly things, but this great work of God, Chriſt *foreordained*, in time ſent for our Redemption, though in moſt deſerves our attentive regard, yet we do not view and conſider it as we ought.

Was manifeſted in thoſe laſt times for you.] This is the performance of that purpoſe, he was manifeſted, both by his Incarnation, according to that word of the Apoſtle St. *Paul*, *Manifeſted in the fleſh*, &c. manifeſted by his marvellous Works, and Doctrine, and by his Sufferings, and Death, and Reſurrection, and Aſcenſion, by the ſending down of the Holy Ghoſt according to his promiſe, and by the preaching of the Goſpel, in the fulneſs of time that God had appointed, wherein all the prophecies that foretold his comeing, and all the Types, and Ceremonies that prefigur'd him had their accompliſhment.

The times of the Goſpell are called the *laſt times* often by the Prophets; for that the Jewiſh Prieſthood, and Ceremonies being aboliſhed, that which ſucceeded was appointed by God to remain the ſame to the End of the world, beſides this, the time of our Saviours Incarnation may be called the laſt times, becauſe, although it were not near the End of

time

time by many ages, yet in all probability it is much nearer the end of time then the beginning of it, some resemble the time of his sufferings in the end of the world, to the paschal Lamb in the Evening.

It was doubtless the fit time, but notwithstanding the Schoolmen offer at reasons to prove the fitness of it, as their humour is to prove all things. None dare I think conclude, but if God had so appointed, it might have been either sooner, or later, and our safest is to rest in that, that it was the fit time, because so it pleased him, and to seek no other Reason, why having promis'd the Messiah so quickly after Man's fall, he defer'd his coming about four Thousand years, and a great part of that time shut up the knowledge of himself, and the true Religion, within the narrow compass of that one nation of which Christ was to be born: Of these and such like things we can give no other reason but that which he teacheth us in a like case, *even so Father because it seemeth good unto thee.*

For you,] The Apostle represents these things to those he writes to particularly for their use, therefore he applies it to them; but without prejudice of the Believers that went before, or of those that were to follow in after ages. He that is here said to be *foreappointed* before the foundation of the world, is therefore called, *a Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.* And as the vertue of his death looks backward to all preceding ages, whose Faith and Sacrifices look'd forward to it, so the same death is of force and perpetuall value to the End of the world, *after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever,* says the Apostle, to the *Heb.* *He sate down on the*

right

right hand of God; for by one offering, he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified. The Crosse on which he was extended points in the length of it to Heaven and Earth reconciling them together, and in the breadth of it to former and following ages, as being equally salvation to both.

In this appropriating, and peculiar interest in Jesus Christ is our happiness, without which it availes not that he was ordained from Eternity, and in Time manifested, 'tis not the Generall contemplation, but the peculiar possession of Christ that gives both solid Comfort, and strong persuasion to Obedience, and Holyness, which is here the Apostle's particular scope.

Verse 21.

Who by him do believe in God that raised him up from the dead, and gave him glory, that your Faith and hope might be in God.

NOW because 'tis Faith that gives the soul this particular title to Jesus Christ, the Apostle addes that, to declare who he meant by *Tous* (sayes he) *who by him do believe in God*, &c.

Where we have. 1. The compleat Object of Faith. 2. The Ground, or Warrant of it. The object, *God in Christ*. The Ground or warrant, *in that he raised him up from the dead and gave him glory.*

A

A Man may have (living out of Christ) yea, he must, he cannot chuse but have a conviction within him that there is a God, and further he may have, even out of Christ, some kind of belief of those things that are spoken concerning God, but to repose on God, as his God, and his Salvation which is indeed to believe in him, this cannot be, but where Christ is the mids through which we look upon God; for so long as we look upon God through our own Guiltiness, we can see nothing, but his wrath, and apprehend him as an armed enemy, and be so far off from resting on him, as our happiness, that the more we view it, it puts us upon the more speed to fly from him, and to cry out, *Who can dwell with Everlasting burnings, and abide with a consuming fire?* But our Saviour taking sin out of the way, put himself betwixt our sins and God, and so makes a wonderfull change of our apprehension of him. When you look through a red glass, the whole Heavens seem bloody; But through pure uncoloured glass, you receive the clear light, that is so refreshing and comfortable to behold: When Sin unpardoned is betwixt, and we look on God through that, we can perceive nothing but Anger, and Enmity in his Countenance: But make Christ once the Medium, our pure Redeemer, and through him as clear transparent Glass, the beams of Gods favourable Countenance shine in upon the soul, the Father cannot look upon us, wellbeloved son, but graciously and pleasingly. God lookes on us out of Christ, sees us rebels, and fit to be condemned, we look on God as being just and powerfull to punish us, but when Christ is betwixt, God looks on us in him, as justified,

fied, and we look on God in him as pacified, and ſee the ſmiles of his favourable countenance: Take Chriſt out, all is terrible; interpoſe him, all is full of peace. Therefore ſet him always betwixt, and by him we ſhall believe in God.

The warrant and ground of believing in God by him is this, that God *rais'd him from the dead, and gave him glory*, which evidences the full ſatisfaction of his death, and in all that work both in his humiliation, and exaltation ſtanding in our room, we may repute it his as ours: if all is payed that could be exacted of him, and therefore he ſet free from death, then are wee acquitted and have nothing to pay: If he was rais'd from the dead and exalted to glory then ſo ſhall we, he hath taken poſſeſſion of that glory for us and we may judge our ſelves poſſeſſed in it, already, becauſe he our head poſſeſſeth it. And this the laſt words of the *Verſe* confirm to us, in meaning this to be the very purpoſe and end for which God having given him to death *raiſed him up and gave him glory*, 'tis for this end expreſſly that *our faith and hope might be in God*: The laſt end is that we may have life and glory through him; the nearer end, that in the mean while, till we attain them, we may have firme belief and hope of them, and reſt on God as the giver of them, and ſo in part enjoy them before hand, and be upheld in our joy and conflicts by the comfort of them; and as St. *Steven* in his viſion, faith doth in a ſpirituall way look through all the viſible heavens, and ſee Chriſt at the Fathers right hand, and is comforted by that in the greateſt troubles, though it were amidſt a ſhowre of ſtones, as he. The comfort is no leſs than this, that being by faith

made one with Christ, his present glory wherein he sits at the Fathers right hand is assurance to us, *that where he is we shall be also.*

Verse 22.

Seeing ye have purified your Souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit, unto unfeigned Love of the brethren; see that ye Love one another with a pure heart fervently.

JEsus Christ is made unto us of God, *wisdom, Righteousness, Sanctification, and Redemption,* 1 Cor. 1. 30. 'Tis a known truth, and yet very needful to be often represented to us, that Redemption and holiness are undivided Companions, yea, that we are redeem'd on purpose for this End, that we should be Holy. The pressing of this, we see is here the Apostles scope, and having by that reason enforc'd it in the general, he now takes that as concluded, and confess'd, and so makes use of it particularly to exhort that main Christian Grace of *brotherly love.*

The Obedience, and holiness mention'd in the foregoing *Verse,* comprehends the whole duties, and and frame of a Christian life towards God, and Men and having urg'd that in the general, he specifies this Grace of mutual Christian Love, as the great Evidence of their sincerity, and the truth of

their

their Love to God: for Men are ſubject to much hypocriſie this way, and deceive themſelves if they find themſelves diligent in religious Exerciſes, they ſcarce once ask their hearts, how they ſtand affected this way, Namely, in love to their Brethren. They can come conſtantly to the Church, and pray, it may be, at home too, and yet cannot find in their hearts to forgive an Injury.

As forgiving Injuries argues the truth of Piety, ſo 'tis that which makes all converſe both ſweet and profitable, and beſides it Graces, and commends Men, and their holy profeſſion to ſuch as are without and ſtrangers to it, yea, even to their Enemies.

Therefore is it, that our Saviour doth ſo much recommend this to his Diſciples, and they to others as we ſee in all their *Epiſtles*. He gives it them as the very badge and Livery by which they ſhould be known for his followers, *by this ſhall all men know that ye are my Diſciples, if ye Love one another.* And St. *Paul* is frequent in exhorting and extolling this Grace *Rom.* 12. 10 & 13. 8. 1 *Cor.* 1. 13 *Gal.* 5. 13. *Eph.* 4. 2. and in many other places. *Colloſſ.* 3. 14. he calls it *the bond of perfectneſs*, that Grace which unites, and binds all together. Our Apoſtle here, and often in this and the other *Epiſtle*, and that beloved Diſciple St. *John* who leaned on our Saviours breſt, drunk deep of that ſpring of Love that was here, and therefore it ſtreams forth ſo abundantly in his writings, they contain nothing ſo much as this divine Doctrine of Love.

We have here 1. The due Qualifications of it. 2. A Chriſtians Obligation to it.

The Qualifications are three: Namely, *ſincerity*,

purity and fervency. The ſincerity expreſs'd in the former clauſe of the *Verſe*, *unfeigned Love* and repeated again in the latter part, that it be *with a pure heart*, as the purity is *in fervency.*

It appears that this diſſimulation is a diſeaſe that is very incident in this particular. The Apoſtle St. *Paul* hath the ſame word, *Rom.* 12. 9. And the the Apoſtle St. *John* to the ſame ſenſe, 1 *Joh.* 3. 18. That it have that double reality, which is oppoſed to double diſſembled love, that it be Cordial, and Effectual that the profeſſing of it ariſe from truth of affection, and as much as may be, be ſeconded with action; that both the heart, and the hand may be more the ſeal of it than the tongue. Not Court-holy water, an empty noiſe of Service, and affection, that fears nothing more than to be put upon tryal. Although thy Brother with whom thou converſeſt cannot, it may be, ſee through thy falſe appearances, he that commands this Love looks moſt within, ſeeks it there, and if he find it not there, hates them moſt that moſt pretend it; ſo that art of diſſembling, never ſo well ſtudied, cannot paſs in this Kings Court, to whom all hearts are open, and all deſires known. When after Variances Men are brought to an agreement, they are much ſubject to this, rather to cover their remaining malices with ſuperficial verbal forgiveneſs, than to diſlodge them, and free the heart of them, this is a poor ſelf deceit, as the *Philoſopher* ſaid to him that being aſhamed that he was eſpyed by him in a Tavern in the outer Room withdrew himſelf to the inner, he called after him, *thats not the way out, the more you go that way you will be the further within*

within it. When hatreds upon admonition are not thrown out, but retire inward to hide themſelves, they grow deeper, and ſtronger than before, and thoſe conſtrained ſemblances of reconcilement are but a falſe healing, do but skin it over, and therefore uſually it breaks forth worſe again.

How few are there that have truly maliceleſs hearts, and find this intire upright affection towards their Brethren meeting them in their whole Converſation, this Law of love deeply impreſs'd on their hearts, and from thence expreſs'd in their words, and actions, and that is *unfeigned love* as real to their Brethren as to themſelves.

2. It muſt be *pure*, from a pure heart, this is not all one with the former as ſome take it: 'Tis true doubleneſs, and hypocriſie is an impurity, and a great one, but all impurity is not doubleneſs, one may really mean that friendſhip, and affection he expreſſes and yet it may be moſt contrarie to that which is here requir'd, becauſe impure; ſuch a *brotherly Love*, as that of *Simeon* and *Levi* brethen in Iniquity as the expreſſing them brethren *Gen.* 49. is taken to mean. When hearts are cemented together by impurity it ſelfe, by ungodly converſation and ſociety in ſin, as in uncleanneſs, or drunkenneſs, &c. This is a ſwiniſh fraternity, and friendſhip that is contracted as it were by wallowing in the ſame mire, call it good fellowſhip or what you will, all the fruit that in the end can be expected out of unholy friendlineſs, and fellowſhip in ſinning together, is to be tormented together, and add each to the torment of another.

The mutual Love of Chriſtians muſt be pure, ariſing

arising from such causes as are pure and spiritual, from the sense of our Saviour's Command, and of his example; For he himself joynes that with it. *A new Commandment give I you,* saith he, *that as I have loved you so you also love one another.* They that are indeed Lovers of God they are united, by that their hearts meet in him, as in one center. They cannot but love one another; where a godly Man sees his Fathers Image, he is forc'd to love it, he he loves those he perceives Godly, so as to delight in them, because that Image is in them, and those that appear destitute of it, he loves them so, as to wish them partakers of that Image. And this is all for God, he loves *Amicum in Deo & inimicum propter Deum.* That is, he loves a friend in God, and an Enemy for God. And as the Christians love is pure in its Cause, so in its Effects, and Exercise, his society, and converse with any, tends mainly to this, that he may mutually help, and be helpt in the knowledge, and love of God, desires most, that he and his brethren may joyntly mind their journey heavenwards, and further one another in their way to the full Enjoyment of God. And this is truly the love of a pure heart, that both begins and ends in God.

Fervently] Not after a cold indifferent manner, Let the Love of your Brethren be as a fire within you, consuming that selfishness that is so contrary to it, and is so natural to Men, let it set your thoughts on work to study how to do others good, let your love be an active Love, intense within you, and extending it selfe in doing good to the souls, and bodies of your Brethren as they need,

and

and you are able, *Alium re, alium conſilio, alium gratia.* as *Sen. de benef. Lib.* 1. *cap.* 2.

It is ſelfe-love that contracts the heart, and ſhuts out all other Love both of God and Men, ſave only ſo far as our own Intereſt carries, and that is ſtill ſelf-love: But the Love of God dilates the heart, purifies Love, and extends it to all Men, but after a ſpecial manner directs it to thoſe that are more peculiarly beloved of him, and that is here the particular love required.

Love of the Brethren] In this is implied our Obligation to it after a ſpecial manner, to love thoſe of the houſhold of faith, becauſe they are our Brethren. This concludes not only, as *Abraham* ſaid *that there ought to be no ſtrife*; but it binds moſt ſtrongly to this ſincere and pure and fervent love; and therefore the Apoſtle in the next *Verſe* repeats expreſly the Doctrine of the myſterious New-birth, and explains it more fully, which he had mention'd in the entrance of the *Epiſtle* and again refer'd to it, *Verſe* 14, 17.

There is in this fervent Love, ſympathy with the griefs of our Brethren, deſire and endeavour to help them, bearing their infirmities, and recovering them too, if it may be; raiſing them when they fall, admoniſhing and reproving them as is needful, ſometimes ſharply, and yet ſtill in Love, Rejoycing in their good, in their Gifts, and Graces, ſo far from envying them, that we be glad as if they were our own, there is the ſame blood running in their veins, you have the ſame Father, and the ſame ſpirit within you, and the ſame Jeſus Chriſt the head of that glorious fraternity, *the firſt born among many Brethren,*

thren, of which the Apoſtle ſaith, *Eph.* 1. 10. that *he hath, recollected into one, all things in heaven and in earth.* The word is, gathered them into one head. And ſo ſuits very fitly to expreſs that our union in him, in whom, ſayes he, in that ſame *Epiſtle c.* 4. 16. *The whole body is fitly compacted together*, and addes that which agrees to our purpoſe, that this body *grows up and edifies it ſelfe in love.* All the members receive ſpirits from the ſame head and are uſeful and ſerviceable one to another, and to the whole body. Thus theſe Brethren receiving of the ſame ſpirit from their head Chriſt, are moſt ſtrongly bent to the good one of another. If there be but a thorn in the Foot, the Back boweth, the Head ſtoops down, the Eyes look, the Hands reach to it, and endeavour its help, and eaſe. In a word, all the members partake of the good, and evil one of another. Now by how much this body is more ſpiritual, and lively, ſo much the ſtronger muſt the union and love of the parts of it be each to other. You are brethren by the ſame new birth, and born to the ſame Inheritance, and ſuch an one as ſhall not be an Apple of ſtrife amongſt you, to beget debates and contentions. No, 'tis enough for all, and none ſhall prejudge another, but you ſhall have joy in the happineſs one of another, ſeeing you ſhall then be perfect in love, all harmony, no difference in judgement, nor affection, all your harps tun'd to the ſame new Song, which you ſhall ſing for ever, let that love begin here which ſhall never end.

And this ſame union (I conceive) is likewiſe made

preſſed in the firſt words of the *verſe*, ſeeing you are partakers of that work of ſanctification by the ſame word, and the ſame ſpirit that works it in all the faithfull, and by that are called, and incorporate into that fraternity; therefore live in it and like it. You are purified to it, therefore love one another after that ſame manner purely, Let the profane world ſcoffe that name of *Brethren*, you will not be ſo fooliſh as to be ſcorn'd out of it, being ſo honourable, and happy, and the day is at hand wherein thoſe that ſcoffe you, would give much more than all that the beſt of them ever poſſeſſ'd in the world to be admitted into your number.

Seeing you have purifi'd your ſouls in obeying the truth through the Spirit] Here is. 1. The chief ſeat, or ſubject of the work of ſanctification, *the Soul*. 2. The ſubordinate means, *Truth*. 3. The Nature of it, *obeying of truth*. 4. The chief worker of it, *The Holy Spirit*.

For the firſt,] 'Tis no doubt a work that goes through the whole man, renews and purifies all, *Heb.* 10. 22. 2 *Cor.* 7. 1. But becauſe it purifies the ſoul, therefore 'tis, that does purifie all. There begins impurity, *Matt.* 15. not onely evil thoughts, but all evill actions come forth from the heart, which is there all one with the ſoul, and therefore this purifying begins there, makes the tree good that the fruit may be good. 'tis not ſo much externall performances that are the difference of Men, as their inward temper, we meet here in the ſame place, and all partake of the ſame word, and prayer. But how wide a difference is there in Gods eye, betwixt an unwaſh'd profane heart, in the ſame exerciſe, and a ſoul puri-

fied in some measure *in obeying the truth*, and desirous to be further purified by further obeying it.

2. That which is the subordinate means of this purity is the *Truth*, or the word of God. it is truth, and pure in it self, and begets truth, and purity in the heart, by teaching it concerning the holy and pure nature of God, shewing it, and his holy will, which is to us the rule of purity. And by representing Jesus Christ unto us as the fountain of our purity, and Renovation, from whose fulness we *may receive grace for grace.*

3. The nature of this work, that wherein the very being of this purifying consists, is, *the Receiving, or Obeying of this Truth* So *Gal.* 3. 1. Where 'tis put for right believing. The chief point of obedience is believing, the proper obedience to Truth is, to give credit to it, and this divine belief doth necessarily bring the whole soul into obedience, and conformity to that pure Truth, which is in the word, and so the very purifying, and renewing of the soul is this obedience, of faith, as unbelief is its cheif impurity and disobedience, therefore *Act.* 15. 9. faith is said to *purifie the heart.*

4. The chief worker of this sanctification is *the Holy Spirit of God*, they are said here to *purifie themselves.* For 'tis certain, and undeniable that the soul it self doth act in believing, or obeying the truth, but not of it self, it is not the first principle of motion. They purifie their souls, but 'tis *by the spirit.* They doe it by his enlivening power, and a purifying vertue recevied from him, Faith, or obeying the truth works this purity: But the Holy Ghost works that faith, as in the forecited place, God is said to purifie

purifie their hearts by faith. *Verſe*, 8. He doth that by giving them the Holy Ghoſt. The truth is pure, and purifying, yet can it not of it ſelf purifie the ſoul, but by the obeying or believing it, and the ſoul cannot obey, or believe, but by the ſpirit, which works in it that faith, and by that faith purifies it, and works Love in it, 'its the Impurity and Earthlineſs of Mens minds that is the great cauſe of diſunion, and diſaffection amongſt them, and of all their ſtrifes. *Jam.* 4. 1.

This ſpirit is that fire that refines, and purifies the ſoul from the droſs of earthly deſires that poſſeſs it, and ſublimates it to the love of God, and of his Saints becauſe they are his, and are purified by the ſame ſpirit. Tis the property of fire to draw together things of the ſame kind, the outward fire of Enmities, and perſecution that are kindled againſt the godly by the world, doth ſome-what, and if it were more conſidered by them would do more in this knitting their hearts cloſer one to another, but it is this inward pure and purifying fire of the Holy Ghoſt that doth moſt powerfully unite them.

The true reaſon why there is ſo little truth of this Chriſtian mutuall Love amongſt thoſe that are called Chriſtians, is, becauſe there is ſo little of this purifying Obedience to the truth whence it flowes, Faith unfeigned would beget this Love unfeigned, men may exhort to them both, but they require the hand of God to work them in the heart.

Verſe 23.

Being borne again not of Corruptible ſeed: But of Incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever.

THE two things that make up the Apoſtles Exhortation, are the very ſumme of a Chriſtians duty to walk as obedient children towards God, and loving brethen one towards another: And that it may yet have the deeper impreſſion he here repreſents to them anew, that new birth he mentioned before, by which they are the children of God, and ſo brethren.

We ſhall firſt ſpeak of this Regeneration. And then of the Seed. This is the great dignity of believers, that they are the ſons of God *Jo.* 1. 12. and the great Evidence of the love of God, that he hath beſtow'd this dignity on them 1 *Jo.* 3. 1. For they are no way needfull to him, he had from Eternity a Son perfectly like himſelf, *the character of his perſon*, and one Spirit proceeding from both, and there is no Creation, neither the firſt, nor the ſecond, can add any thing to thoſe, and their happineſs, 'tis moſt true of that bleſſed Trinity. *Satis amplum alter alteri Theatrum ſumus.* But the gracious purpoſe of God, to impart his goodneſs appears in this, that he hath made himſelf ſuch a multitude of ſons, not onely Angels, that are ſo

called

called, but man, a little lower than they in nature, yet dignified with this name in his Creation, St. *Luke*, 3. 38. *which was the Son of* Adam, *which was the ſon of God*. He had not onely the Impreſſion of Gods footſteps (as they ſpeak) which all the Creatures have, but of his Image; and moſt of all in this is his rich Grace magnified, that ſin having defac'd that Image, and ſo degraded Man from his honour, and deveſted him of that title of ſonſhip, and ſtampt our polluted nature with the marks of vileneſs and bondage, yea, with the very Image of Satan, Rebellion, and Enmity againſt God; that out of Mankind thus ruin'd, and degenerated, God ſhould raiſe to himſelf a new Race, and Generation of ſons.

For this deſigne was the *word made fleſh*, *Jo.* 1. The ſon made Man, to make men the ſons of God, and 'tis by him, alone we are reſtor'd to this, they that receive him, receive with him, and in him, this priviledge *Verſe.* 12. And therefore 'tis a ſonſhip by Adoption, and is ſo called in ſcripture, in difference from his Eternall, and Ineffable Generation, who is, and that was *the onely begotten ſon of God*, yet that we may know that this divine adoption is not a mere outward Relative Name, as that of men; The ſonſhip of the Saints is here, and often elſewhere in ſcripture expreſſ'd by *new Generation*, and *new birth*. They are *begotten of God*. *Jo.* 1. 13. 1. *Jo.* 2. 29. There is a new being, a ſpirituall life communicated to them, they have in them of their Fathers ſpirit, and this is derived to them through Chriſt, and therefore called his ſpirit. *Gal.* 4. 6. They are not onely accounted of the family of God by

by Adoption, but by this new birth they are indeed his Children, partakers of the divine nature as our Apoſtle expreſſeth it.

Now though it be eaſie to ſpeak, and hear the words of this Doctrine, yet the truth it ſelf that is in it, is ſo high and myſterious, that it is altogether impoſſible without a portion of this new nature to conceive of it. Corrupt nature cannot underſtand it, what wonder that there is nothing of it in the ſubtileſt Schooles of Philoſophers, when a very doctor in Iſrael miſtook it groſſely. *Jo.* 3. It is indeed a great myſtery, and he that was the ſublimeſt of all the Evangeliſt, and therefore call'd the Divine, the ſoaring Eagle (as they compare him) he is more abundant in this ſubject than the reſt.

And the moſt profitable way of conſidering this Regeneration, and Sonſhip, is certainly to follow the light of thoſe holy writings, and not to jangle in diſputes about the order, and manner of it, of which though ſomewhat may be profitably ſaid, and ſafely, Namely, ſo much as the ſcripture ſpeaks, yet much that is ſpoke of it, and debated by many, is but an uſeleſs expence of time and paines. What thoſe previous diſpoſitions are and how far they go, and where is the march, or point of difference betwixt them and the infuſion of ſpirituall life, I conceive not ſo eaſily determinable.

If Naturaliſts, and Phyſicians cannot agree upon the order of formation of the body's parts in the womb, how much leſs can we be peremptory in the other. If there be ſo many wonders (as indeed there be) in the naturall ſtructure and frame of Man, how much richer in wonders muſt this divine and ſupernaturall Generation

ration be, ſee how *David* ſpeaks of the former *Pſal.* 14. 15. Things ſpirituall being more refin'd than Materiall things their workmanſhip muſt be far more wonderfull and curious. But then it muſt be with a ſpirituall eye. There is an unſpeakable luſtre and beaury of the new Creature, by the mixture of all divine Graces, each ſetting off another, as ſo many rich ſeverall colours in embroidery, but who can trace that inviſible hand that works it, ſo as to determine of the order, and to ſay, which was firſt, which ſecond, and ſo on, whether, Faith, or Repentance, and all Graces &c. This is certain, that theſe and all graces doe inſeparably make up the ſame work, and are all in the new formation of every ſoul that is born again.

If the wayes of Gods univerſall providence be untraceable, then moſt of all the workings of his Grace in a ſecret unperceivable way in this new birth: He gives this ſpirituall being, as the dew which is ſilently and inſenſibly formed, and this Generation of the ſons of God compar'd to it by the Pſalmiſt; they have this originall from heaven as the dew; *Jo.* 3. 3. *Except a man be born from above, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God.* And 'tis the peculiar work of the ſpirit of God as he himſelf ſpeaks of the dew to *Job. Job.* 38. 28. *hath the Rain a Father, or who hath begotten the drops of the dew.* The ſharpeſt witts are to ſeek in the knowledge and diſcovery of it, as *Job* ſpeaketh of a way that no fowl knoweth, and *which the vultures eye hath not ſeen, Job.* 28. 7.

To conteſt it much how in this Regeneration he works upon the will, and renews it, is to little pur-

poſe

poſe providing this be granted, that it is in his power to Regenerate, and Renew a Man at his pleaſure: And how is it poſſible not to grant this? unleſs we will run into that Error to think, that God hath made a Creature too hard for himſelf to Rule, or hath willingly exempted it, and ſhall the works of the Almighty, and of all others, eſpecially this work wherein he glories moſt, fail in his hand, and remain Imperfect? ſhall there be any abortive births whereof God is the father? *ſhall I bring to the birth* (ſayes he) *and not cauſe to bring forth?* No, no ſinner ſo dead but there is vertue in his hand to revive out of the very ſtones. Tho the moſt impenitent hearts are as ſtones within them, yet he can make of them children to *Abraham*, He can digg out the heart of ſtone, and put a heart of fleſh in its place, otherwayes he would not have made ſuch a promiſe. *Jo.* 1. 13. *Not of fleſh nor of the will of Man, but of God.* If his ſoveraigne will is not a ſufficient principle of this Regeneration why then ſayes the Apoſtle, St. *James of his own will begat he us*, and he addes the ſubordinate Cauſe, *by the word of truth*, which is here called the Immortall ſeed of this new birth.

Therefore 'tis, that the Lord hath appointed the continuance of the Miniſtry of this word, to the end that his Church may be ſtill fruitfull bringing forth ſons unto him. That the Aſſemblies of his people may be like *flocks of ſheep coming up from the waſhing, none barren amongſt them.*

Though the Miniſters of this word, by reaſon of their employment in diſpenſing it, have by the Scriptures the Reſation of Parents imparted to them, which is an exceeding great dignity for them as they

are

are called *co-workers* with God. And the ſame Apoſtle that writes ſo calls the *Galatians his little Children of whom he travell'd in birth again till Chriſt were formed in them*, and the Miniſters of God have often very much pain in this travel, yet the priviledge of the Father of ſpirits remains untouched, which is effectually to beget again theſe ſame Spirits which he creates, and to make that ſeed of the word fruitful that way, where, and when he will. The Preacher of the Word be he never ſo powerful can caſt this ſeed only into the Ear, his hand reaches no further, and the hearer by his attention may convey it into his head, but 'tis the Supream Father, and Teacher above that carries it in to the heart, the only ſoyl wherein it proves lively, and fruitful. One Man cannot reach the heart of another, how ſhould he then renew its fruitfulneſs? If natural births hath been alwayes acknowledged to belong to Gods prerogative, *Pſal.* 127.3. *Lo Children are an heritage of the Lord, and the fruit of the womb is his reward*, And ſo *Jacob* anſwered wiſely to his Wife's fooliſh paſſion, *am I in Gods ſtead*, how much more is this new birth wholly dependant on his hand.

But though this word cannot beget without him, yet 'tis by this Word that he begets, and ordinarily not without it. 'tis true that the ſubſtantial Eternal word is to us (as we ſaid) the ſpring of this New birth, and life, the head from whom the ſpirits of this ſupernatural life flow, but that by the Word here is meant the Goſpel the Apoſtle puts out of doubt, *Verſe* laſt, *and this is the Word which by the Goſpel is preached unto you*. Therefore it is

indeed that this Word is thus the ſeed of this New birth, becauſe it contains and declares that other word, the Son of God as our life. The word is ſpoken in common, and ſo is the ſame to all hearers, but then all being naturally ſhut againſt it, God doth by his own hand open ſome hearts to receive it, and mixes it with faith, and thoſe it renews, and reſtoreth in them the Image of God, drawes the traits of it anew, and makes them the Sons of God. *My Doctrine ſhall drop as the dew* ſayes, *Moſes*, the word as a heavenly dew not falling beſide, but dropt in to the heart by the hand of Gods own ſpirit makes it all become ſpiritual and heavenly, and turns it into one of thoſe drops of dew that the Children of God are compared to. *Pſal.* 110. *Thou haſt the dew of thy youth.*

The natural eſtate of the ſoul is darkneſs, and the word as a divine light ſhining into it, transforms the ſoul into its own nature; that as the word is called Light, ſo is the ſoul renew'd by it, *ye were darkneſs but now are ye*, not only enlightn'd, but *light in the Lord*. All the evils of the natural mind, are often compriz'd under the name of darkneſs, and Errour, and therefore the whole work of converſion likewiſe ſignified by light and truth, *he begat us by the word of truth*. So 2 *Cor.* 4 6. alluding to the firſt *fiat Lux*, or *Let there be Light*, in the Creation: The word brought within the ſoul by the ſpirit lets it ſee its own neceſſity, and Chriſts ſufficiency, convinceth it throughly, and cauſeth it to caſt over it ſelf upon him for life, and this is the very begetting of it again to Eternal life.

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So that this Efficacy of the word to prove ſucceſsful ſeed, doth not hang upon the different abilities of Preachers, their more or leſs Rhetorick, or Learning. 'Tis true Eloquence hath a great advantage in civil, and moral things to perſwade, and and to draw the hearers by the Ears, almoſt which way it will: but in this ſpiritual work, to revive a ſoul, to beget it anew, the Influence of heaven is the main, there is no way ſo common and plain (being warranted by God in the delivery of laying truth) but the ſpirit of God can revive the ſoul by it, and all the skilful, and moſt autoritative way, yea, being withal very ſpiritual, yet may effect nothing, becauſe left alone to it ſelf: One word of holy Scripture, or of truth conform to it, may be the principle of Regeneration to him that hath heard multitudes of excellent Sermons, and hath often read the whole Bible, and ſtill unchang'd, if the ſpirit of God preach that one or any ſuch word to the Soul, *God ſo loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whoſoever ſhould believe in him ſhould not periſh, but have everlaſting life.* It will be caſt down with the fear of periſhing, and driven out of it ſelf by that, and rais'd up and drawn to Jeſus Chriſt by the hope of everlaſting life, it will believe on him, that it may have life, and be inflamed with the Love of God, and give it ſelf to him, that ſo loved the World, as to give his only begotten Son to purchaſe us that everlaſting life. Thus may that word prove this Immortal Seed, which tho very often read and heard before, was but a dead letter. A drop of thoſe liquors that are called Spirits operates more than large draughts of

other waters; one word ſpoke by the Lord to the heart, is all Spirit, and doth that which whole ſtreams of Mans eloquence could never effect.

In hearing of the Word, Men look uſually too much upon Men, and forget from what ſpring the Word hath its power, they obſerve too narrowly the different hand of the Sowers, and too little depend on his hand that is great Lord both of Seed-time and Harveſt: Be it ſowen by a weak hand, or a ſtronger, the Immortal ſeed is ſtill the ſame, yea, ſuppoſe the worſt that it be a foul hand that ſowes it, that the Preacher himſelf be not ſo ſanctified, and of ſo edifying a life as you would wiſh, yet the ſeed it ſelf being good contracts no defilement, and may be effectual to Regeneration in ſome, and ſtrengthening of others; Although he that is not renew'd by it himſelf, cannot have much hope of ſuch ſucceſs nor reap much comfort by it, and uſually doth not ſeek nor regard it much; but all Inſtruments are alike in an Almighty hand.

Hence learn. 1. That true converſion is not ſo ſlight a work, as we commonly account it. 'Tis not an outward change of ſome bad cuſtomes, which gains the name of a reform'd Man in the ordinary dialect, 'tis a New birth, and Being, and elſewhere called *a new Creation*, though it be but a change in qualities as 'tis ſuch a one, and the qualities ſo far diſtant that it bears the name of the moſt ſubſtantial productions, from *Children of diſobedience*, and that which is link't with it, *heirs of wrath*, to be *ſons of God and heirs of glory*: They have a new ſpirit given, a free princely noble ſpirit, as the word is *Pſal.* 51. and this ſpirit acts in their life and action.

2. Con-

2. Conſider this dignity, and be kindled with the ambition of it, how doth a Chriſtian pity that poor vanity that men make ſo much noiſe about, of of their kindred, and extraction; this is worth glorying in indeed, to be of the higheſt blood-royal and in the neareſt Relation, Sons of the King of Kings by this new birth, and addes Matchleſs honour to that birth which is honourable.

But we all pretend to be of this number. Would we not ſtudy to cozen our ſelves, the diſcovery would not be ſo hard to know whither we are or not.

In many their falſe confidence is too evident: No appearance of the ſpirit of God, not a foot-ſtep like his leading, and that character, *Rom.* 8. 14. not a lineament of God's viſage, as their father, *if ye know that he is righteous*, (ſayes *St. John* 2. 29.) *ye know then that every one that doth righteouſneſs is born of him.* And ſo on the contrary, how contrary to the moſt holy God the lover and fountain of holineſs are they, that Swiniſhly love to wallow in the mire of unholineſs. Is Swearing and Curſing the accent of the Regenerate, the Children of God? No, 'tis the language of Hell. Do children delight to indignifie, and diſhonour their Fathers Name? No, Earthly mindedneſs is a counterſign. Shall the King's Children, *they that were brought up in ſcarlet* (as *Jeremy* laments) *embrace the dunghil?* Princes by their high birth and Education have uſually their hearts fill'd with far higher thoughts than mean perſons, the children of the poorer ſort being pinch'd that way, their greateſt thoughts as they grow up, are ordinarily how they ſhall ſhift to live, how they ſhall get bread,

bread, but Princes think either of the conquest, or governing of Kingdomes. Are you not born to a better Inheritance, (if indeed born again) why then do you vilifie your selves? why not more in Prayer? no dumb children among those that are born of God? they have all the Spirit of Prayer by which they not only speak, but cry *Abba Father*.

2. The most part of us esteem the Preaching of the Word, as an evanishing discourse, that amuses us for an hour, we look for no more, and therefore we find no more, we receive it not as the Immortal seed of our Regeneration, as *the ingrafted Word that is able to save our Souls*. Oh! learn to Reverence this holy, and happy Ordinance of God, this word of life, and know that they that are not Regenerated, and so sav'd by it, shall be judg'd by it.

Not of Corruptible seed] It is a main cause of the unsuitable, and unworthy behaviour of Christians (those that profess themselves such) that a great part of them either do not know, or at least do not seriously, and frequently consider what is indeed the Estate and Quality of a Christian, how excellent and of what descent their new Nature is, therefore they are often to be remembred of this. Our Apostle here doth so, and by it binds on all his Exhortations.

Of this New being we have here these two things. 1. Its high Original from God, begotten again of his word. 2. That which so much commends good things, its duration, and this followes of the other, for if the Principle of this life, be *Incorruptible*, it self must be so too. The word of God is not only a living and ever abiding word in it self, but like-

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wise in reference to this New birth, and spiritual life of a Christian, and so is here intended that is spoke of it, and therefore called not only an abiding word, but *Incorruptible seed*, which expresly relates to Regeneration. And because we are most sensible of the good and evil of things by comparison, The everlastingness of the word and that spiritual life which it begets is set off by the frailty, and shortness of natural Life, and all the good that concerns it. This he expresseth in the words of *Isay* in the next *Verse*.

Verse 24.

For all flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of Grass, the Grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away.

IN expressing the vanity and frailty of the natural life of Man, it is very agreeing with the subject to call him *flesh*, giving to the whole man the name of his corruptible part, both to make the wretched and perishing Condition of this life more sensible, and Man the more humble by it: For though by providing all for the flesh, and bestowing his whole time in the indeavours which are of the flesh's concernment, he remembers it too much, and forgets

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his ſpiritual and Immortal part; yet in that over eager care for the fleſh, in ſome ſenſe he ſeems to forget that he is fleſh, or at leaſt that fleſh is periſhing, becauſe Fleſh; extending his deſires and projects ſo far for the fleſh as if it were Immortal, and ſhould alwayes abide to enjoy, and uſe theſe things; as the Philoſopher ſaid of his Countrymen, upbraiding at once their ſurfettings and exceſs in Feaſting, and their ſumptuouſneſs in building: that they eat as if they meant to die to morrow, and yet built as if they were never to die. Thus in Mens immoderate purſuits of earth, they ſeem both to forget that they are any thing elſe beſide fleſh, and in this ſenſe too, to forget that they are fleſh, that is mortal and periſhing; they neither rightly remember their Immortality nor their Mortality. If we conſider what it is to be fleſh, the naming of that were ſufficient to the purpoſe. *All Man is fleſh*, But 'tis plainer thus, *All fleſh is graſs*, thus in the *Pſalme*, *he remembred that they were but fleſh*, that ſpeaks their frailty enough, but it is added to make the vanity of their eſtate the clearer, *a wind that paſſeth and cometh not again*. *Pſal.* 78. 39. So *Pſal.* 103. 15. *As for man his dayes are as graſs, as a flower of the field ſo he flouriſheth. For the wind paſſeth over it and it is gone, and the place thereof ſhall know it no more.*

This natural Life is compar'd (even by natural Men) to the vaineſt things, and ſcarce find they things light enough to expreſs it *vain*, and as here called *graſs*, ſo they compar'd the generations of Men to the leaves of trees. But the light of Scripture doth moſt diſcover this, and it is a leſſon requires the Spirit of God to teach it aright. *Teach*

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us (ſayes *Moſes Pſa.* 90.) *So to number our dayes that we may apply our hearts unto wiſdom.* and *David Pſa.* 39 *Make me to know my life how frail I am.* So *Jam.* 4. 14. And here its called *graſs.* So *Job.* 14. 12. *Man that is born of a Woman is of few dayes and full of trouble, He cometh forth like a flower, and is cut down.*

Graſs hath its root in the Earth, and is fed by the moiſture of it, and for a while, but beſides that, it is under the hazard of ſuch weather as favours it not, or the ſythe that cuts is down, give it all the forbearance that may be, let it be free from both thoſe, yet how quickly will it wither of it ſelf: Set aſide thoſe many accidents, the ſmalleſt of which is able to deſtroy our naturall life, the diſeaſes of our own bodies, and outward violences, and caſualties that cut down many in their greeneſs, in the flower of their youth, the utmoſt term is not long; In the courſe of nature it will wither. Our life is indeed a lighted torch, either blown out by ſome ſtroake, or ſome wind, or if ſpar'd, yet within a while burnes away, and will dye out of it ſelf.

And all the Glory of man] That is elegantly added. There is indeed a great deal of ſeeming difference betwixt the outward condition of life amongſt Men, ſhall the Rich, and Honourable, and beautifull, and healthfull go in together under the ſame name with the baſer, and unhappier part, the poor wretched ſort of the world, that ſeem to be born for nothing but ſufferings, and miſeries? At leaſt hath the wiſe no advantage beyond the fools, is all graſs? make you no diſtinction? no, *all is graſs*, or if you will have ſome other name, be it ſo, once this is true that all fleſh is graſs, and if that glory that ſhines ſo much

In your eyes muſt have a difference, then this is all it can have, it is but the flower of that ſame graſs, ſomewhat above the common graſs in gayneſs, a little comelier, and better apparrel'd than it, but partaker of its frail and fading nature, hath no priviledge nor immunity that way, yea of the two the leſs durable, and uſually ſhorter liv'd, but the beſt it decayes with it, *the graſs withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away.*

How eaſily and quickly hath the higheſt ſplendor of a Mans proſperity been blaſted, either by Mens power, or the immediate hand of God? The ſpirit of the Lord blowes upon it (as *Eſay* there ſayes) and by that, not only withers the graſs, but the flower fades, though never ſo fair. *When thou correcteſt Man for iniquity thou makeſt his beauty to conſume like a moth. Pſal.* 39. 11. How many have the caſualties of fire, or war, or ſhipwrack in one day, or night, or a ſmall part of either turn'd out of great riches into extream poverty? And the Inſtances are not few of thoſe, that have on a ſudden fallen from the top of honour into the fowleſt diſgraces, nor by degrees comeing down the ſtair they went up, but tumbled down headlong. And the moſt vigorous beauty, and ſtrength of body, how doth a few dayes ſickneſs, or if it ſcape that, a few years time blaſt that flower. yea, thoſe higher advantages that have ſomewhat both of truer, and more laſting beauty in them, the Endowments of witt, and Learning, and Eloquence, yea and of morall Goodneſs, and vertue, yet they cannot riſe above this word, they are ſtill in all their glory but the *flower of graſs*, their Root is in the earth: Natural ornaments are of ſome uſe in this preſent life, but they reach no further. When Men have

waſted

waſted their ſtrength and endur'd the toyl of ſtudy night and day, 'its but a ſmall parcell of knowledge they can attain to, and are forc'd to ly down in the duſt in the midſt of their purſuit of it; that head that lodges moſt ſciences ſhall within a while be diſfurniſh'd of them all, and the tongue that ſpeaks moſt languages ſilenc'd.

The great projects of Kings, and Princes, and they alſo themſelves, come under this ſame notion, all the vaſt deſignes that are framing in their heads, fall to the ground in a moment, *they returne to their duſt and in that day all their thoughts periſh*. *Archimedes* was killed in the midſt of his demonſtration.

If they themſelves did conſider this in the heat of their affairs, it would much allay the ſwelling and loftineſs of their minds, and if theſe that live upon their favour, would conſider it, they would not value it at ſo high a rate, and buy it ſo dear, as often they doe. *Men of low degree are vanity*, ſayes the *Pſalmiſt*, but he adds *Men of high degree are a lie*, from baſe mean perſons we expect nothing, but the eſtate of great perſons promiſes fair, and often keeps not, therefore a lie, although they can leaſt endure that word.

They are in reſpect of mean perſons as the flower to the graſs, ſomewhat a fairer luſtre they have; but no more endurance, nor exemption from decaying, thus then it is an univerſall, and undenyable truth. It begins here with a *Nisi* and is as ſure a Concluſion as the ſureſt of theſe in their beſt Demonſtrations which they call *Nisi*. And as particular Men ſo whole States, and Kingdomes are thus, they have their budding, and flouriſhing, and withering, and it is in both as with flowers, when they are fulleſt

ſpread, then they are near their declining, and withering, and thus it is with all whole Generations of Men upon Earth, as *Solomon* ſayes, *One goeth and another cometh*; but not a word of abiding at all. We in our thoughts ſhut up death into a very narrow compaſs, namely, In the moment of our expiring, but the truth is, as the Moraliſt obſerves, it goes through all our life, for we are ſtill loſing, and ſpending it as we enjoy it, yea, our very enjoying it, is the ſpending it; yeſterdayes life is dead to day, and ſo ſhall this day's life be to morrow. *We ſpend our years*, ſayes *Moſes*, *as a tale*, or as a thought, ſo ſwift and evaniſhing is it. Each word helps a tale towards its end, and then in that the vanity, when 'its done it evaniſhes as a ſound in the air. What's become of all the pompous ſolemnities of Kings and Princes, at their births, and Marriages and Coronations, and Triumphs? they are now as a dream *Act.* 25. 23.

Hence learn the folly, and pride of Man that can glory and pleaſe himſelf in the frail and wretched being he hath here, that dotes on this poor natural life, and cannot be perſuaded to think on one higher, and more abiding. Although the courſe of times and his daily Experience tells him this truth, *that all fleſh is graſs*, yea, the Prophet prefixes to theſe words a command of Crying, they muſt be ſhouted aloud in our ears ere we will hear them, and by that time the ſound of the cry is done, we have forgot it again. Would we conſider this in the midſt of thoſe vanities that toſſe our light minds too and fro, it would give us wiſer thoughts, and balaſt our hearts make them more ſolid, and ſtedfaſt

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in thoſe ſpirituall endeavours, which concerne a durable condition, a being that abides for ever, in comparison of which the longeſt term of naturall life is leſs than a moment, and the happieſt eſtate of it, but a heap of miſeries; Were all of us more conſtantly proſperous than any of us is, yet that one thing were enough to cry down the price we put upon this life, that it continues not. As he anſwered to one that had a mind to flatter him in the midſt of a pompuous triumph, by ſaying, what is wanting here? *continuance* ſaid he: 'Twas wiſely ſaid at any time, but moſt of all to have ſo ſober a thought in ſuch a ſolemnity, in which weak heads cannot eſcape either to be wholly drunk, or ſomewhat giddy at leaſt: Sure we forget this, when we grow vain upon any humane glory, or advantage, the colour of it pleaſes us, and we forget that it is but a flower, and fooliſhly overeſteem it, this is *that madneſs upon flowers*, that is ſomewhere in requeſt, where they will give as much for one flower as would buy a good dwelling houſe. Is it not a moſt fooliſh bargain to beſtow continuall pains, and diligence upon purchaſing of great poſſeſſions, or honours? if we believe this that the beſt of them is no other, but a ſhort liv'd flower, and neglect the purchaſe of thoſe glorious manſions of Eternity, a garland of ſuch flowers as wither not, an unfading crown, that everlaſting life, and thoſe Everlaſting pleaſures that are at the right hand of God.

Now that life which ſhall never end muſt begin here, it is the new ſpirituall life, whereof the word of God is the immortall ſeed, and in oppoſition to corruptible ſeed, and the corruptible life of fleſh it

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is here ſaid to endure for ever. And for this end is the frailty of naturall life mention'd, that our affections may be drawn off from it to this ſpirituall life that is not ſubject unto death.

Verſe. 25.

But the word of the Lord endureth for ever, And this is the word which by the Goſpel is preached unto you.

THE word of God is ſo like himſelf, and carries ſo the Image and impreſſion of his power, and wiſdom, that where they are ſpoke of together it is ſometimes doubtfull, whether the words are to be referr'd to himſelf, or to his word, ſo *Heb.* 4. 12. And ſo here: But there is no hazard, ſeeing there is truth in both, and pertinency too, for they that referr them to God, affirm that they are intended for the extolling of his word, being the ſubject in hand, and that we may know it to be like him. But I rather think here, that theſe words are meant of the word, it is called living as here, *Heb.* 4. And *abiding for ever* is expreſſely repeated of it here in the Prophet's words. And (with reſpect to thoſe Learned Men, that apply them to God) I remember not that this *abiding for ever* is uſ'd to expreſs Gods Eternity in himſelf. Howſoever this incorruptible ſeed is the living and everlaſting word of the living and Everlaſting God, and is therefore ſuch, becauſe he whoſe it is, is ſuch.

Now this is not to be taken in a abſtract ſenſe of the word onely in its own nature, but as the princi-

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ple of Regeneration, the ſeed of this new life; becauſe the word is enlivening and living; therefore they with whom it is effectuall, and into whoſe hearts it is receiv'd are begotten again, and made alive by it, and becauſe the word is incorruptible, and endureth for ever, therefore that Life begot by it, is ſuch too, cannot periſh nor be cut down, as the naturall Life; No, this Spirituall Life of grace is the certain beginning of that eternall Life of glory, and ſhall end in it, and therefore hath no end.

As the word of God in it ſelfe cannot be aboliſh'd, but ſurpaſſes the endurance of the Heaven and Earth as our Saviour teaches, and all the attempts of men againſt the Divine truth, of that word to undo it, are as vain, as if they ſhould conſult to pluck the Sun out of the Firmament, ſo likewiſe in the heart of a Chriſtian, it is Immortall, and incorruptible. Where it is once received by faith, it cannot be obliterated again, all the powers of darkneſs cannot deſtroy it, although they be never ſo diligent in their attempts that way; and this is the comfort of the Saints, that the life which God by his word hath breath'd into their Souls, though it have many, and ſtrong enemies, ſuch as they themſelves could never hold out againſt, yet for his own glory, and his promiſe ſake, he will maintain that life and bring it to its perfection; *God will perfect that which concerneth me*, ſaith the *Pſalmeſt*. 'Tis groſſely contrary to the truth of the Scriptures to imagine, that they that are thus renewed can be unborn again: This new birth is but once of one kind, though they are ſubject to frailties and weakneſſes here in this ſpirituall life, yet not to death any more, nor to ſuch way of ſinning as would extinguiſh

tinguiſh this life. This is that which the Apoſtle *John* ſayes, *he that is born of God ſinneth not*, and the reaſon he addes, is the ſame that is here given, the permanence and incorruptibleneſs of this word, *the ſeed of God abideth in him.*

This is the word which by the Goſpel is preached unto you.] 'Tis not ſufficient to have theſe thoughts of the word of God in a generall way, and not to know what that word is, but we muſt be perſwaded, that that word which is *preached to us*, is this very word of ſo excellent vertue, and of which theſe high things are ſpoken, that it is *incorruptible*, and *abideth for ever*, and therefore ſurpaſſes all the world, and all the excellencies and glory of it. Although delivered by weak Men the Apoſtles, and by far weaker than they in the conſtant miniſtry of it, yet it loſeth none of its own vertue, for that depends upon the firſt owner, and author of it, the everliving God, who by it begets his choſen unto life eternall.

This therefore is that which we ſhould learn thus to hear, and thus to receive, and eſteem, and love this holy, this living word, to deſpiſe all the gliſtring vanities of this periſhing life, all outward pomp, yea all inward worth, all wiſdom, and naturall endowments of mind, in compariſon of the heavenly light of the Goſpell preach'd unto us. Rather to hazard all than loſe that, and baniſh all other things from that place that is due to it, to lodge it alone in our hearts, as our onely treaſure here, and the certain pledge of that treaſure of glory laid up for us in heaven: To which bleſſed ſtate God of his Infinit mercy bring us. *Amen.*

Chap. 2.

Chap. Second.

1 *Pet.* Chap. 2. Verſe 1. 2.

Wherefore laying aſide all Malice, and all guile, and Hypocriſies, and Envies, and all evil ſpeakings,

Verſe. 2. *As new born babes deſire the ſincere milk of the Word, that ye may grow thereby.*

THe ſame power, and goodneſs of God that manifeſts it ſelf in giving being to his creatures, appears likewiſe in their ſuſtaining, and preſervation; to give being is the firſt, and to ſupport it, is the continued effect of that power, and goodneſs: Thus it is both in the firſt Creation, and in the ſecond, In the firſt the creatures to which he gave Life, he provided with convenient nouriſhment to uphold that life, *Gen.* 1. So here in the cloſe of the former *Chapter* we find the Doctrine of the New birth, and life of a Chriſtian, and in the beginning of this, the proper food of that life, and it is the ſame word by which we there find it to be begotten, that is here the nouriſhment of it, and therefore Chriſtians are here exhorted by the Apoſtle ſo to eſteem, and ſo to uſe it, and that is the main ſcope of the words,

Obſ. in general. The word, the principle and the ſupport of our ſpiritual being, is both the *incorruptible ſeed*, and the *incorruptible food* of that new life of grace, which muſt therefore be an incorruptible life; And this may convince us, that the ordinary thoughts even of us, that hear this word, are far below the true excellency and worth of it, the ſtream of cuſtom and our profeſſion brings us hither, and we ſitt out our hour under the ſound of this Word, but how few conſider and prize it, as the great Ordinance of God for the ſalvation of Souls? The beginner and the ſuſtainer of the Divine life of Grace within us? and certainly until we have theſe thoughts of it, and ſeek to feel it thus our ſelves, although we hear it moſt frequently, and ſlip no occaſion, yea, hear it with attention, and ſome preſent delight, yet ſtill we miſſe the right uſe of it, and turn it from its true end, while we take it not as *that ingrafted word which is able to ſave our ſouls.*

Thus ought they that Preach to ſpeak it, to endeavour their utmoſt to accommodate it to this end, that ſinners may be converted, begotten again, and believers nouriſh'd, and ſtrengthned in their ſpiritual life, to regard no lower end, but aim ſteddily at that mark. Their hearts and tongues ought to be ſet on fire with holy zeal for God, and love to ſouls, kindled by the Holy Ghoſt that came down on the Apoſtles in the ſhape of fiery tongues.

And they that hear, ſhould remember this as the end of their hearing that they may receive ſpiritual life and ſtrength by the word, for though it ſeems a poor deſpicable buſines, that a frail ſinful Man like

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your ſelves ſpeak a few words in your hearing: yet look upon it as the way wherein God communicates happineſs to them that believe, and works that believing unto happineſs, alters the whole frame of the ſoul, and makes a new creation, as it begets it again to the inheritance of glory: Conſider it thus, which is its true notion, and then what can be ſo precious? Let the world diſeſteem it as they will, know ye, that *it is the power of God unto ſalvation. The Preaching of the croſs is to them that periſh fooliſhneſs: but unto them that are ſaved, it is the power of God*, ſayes the Apoſtle, 1 *Cor.* 1. 18. And if you would have the experience of this, if you would have life, and growth by it, you muſt look above the poor worthleſs Meſſenger, and call in his almighty help who is the Lord of life. As the *Philoſophers* affirm, that if the Heavens ſhould ſtand ſtill there would be no generation, nor flouriſhing of any thing here below, 'tis the moving and influence of the ſpirit that makes the Church fruitful. Would you do this before you come here, preſent the blindneſs of your minds and the deadneſs of your hearts to God, and ſay, Lord here's an opportunity for thee to ſhew the power of thy word. I would find life and ſtrength in it, but neither can I that hear, nor he that ſpeaks, make it thus unto me, that's thy prerogative, ſay thou the word, and it ſhall be done. *God ſaid let there be light and it was light.*

In this Exhortation to the due uſe of the word, the Apoſtle continues the reſemblance of that new birth he mention'd *Chap.* 1.

As new born babes] Be not ſatisfied with your

ſelves till you find ſome evidence of this new, this ſupernatural life. There be delights and comforts in this life, in its loweſt condition that would perſwade us to look after it, if we knew them; The moſt cannot be made ſenſible of thoſe, conſider therefore the end of it. Better never to have been, than not to have been partaker of this new being, *Except a man be born again*, ſayes our Saviour, *he cannot enter into the Kingdome of God*. Surely they that are not born again, ſhall one day wiſh they had never been born. What a poor wretched thing is the life that we have here, a very heap of follies and miſeries, now if we would ſhare in a happier being after it, that life that ends not, it muſt begin here; grace and glory, is one and the ſame Life; only with this difference, that the one is the beginning, and the other the perfection of it; or if we do call them two ſeveral lives, yet the one is the undoubted pledge of the other. 'Twas a ſtrange word for a Heathen to ſay, that, that day of death we fear ſo, *æterni natalis eſt, is the birth day of Eternity:* Thus it is indeed to thoſe that are here born again, this new birth of grace, is the ſure earneſt and counterpawn of that birth day of glory. Why do we not then labour to make this certain by the former? Is it not a fearful thing, to ſpend our dayes in vanity? and then ſy down in darkneſs and ſorrow for ever, to diſregard the life of our ſoul while we may and ſhould be provident for it, and then when its going out cry, *quo nunc abibit*, whither art thou going O my ſoul?

But this new life puts us out of the danger and fear of that Eternal death *we are paſſed from death*

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to life, ſayes St. *John*, ſpeaking of thoſe that are born again, and being paſſed, there is no repaſſing, no going back from this life to death again.

This new birth is the ſame that St. *John* calls the *firſt Reſurrection*, and pronounces them bleſſed that partake of it, *Bleſſed are they that have part in the firſt Reſurrection, the ſecond death ſhall have no power over them.*

The weak beginnings of grace in compariſon of further ſtrength attainable even in this life, are ſometimes expreſs'd as the infancy of it, and ſo believers ought not to continue Infants, and if they do, 'tis reprovable in them, as we ſee *Eph.* 4. 14. 1 *Cor.* 2. 2. & 1 *Cor.* 14. 20. *Heb.* 5. 12. though the Apoſtle writes to new Converts, , and ſo may poſſibly imply, the tenderneſs of their beginnings of grace, yet I conceive that Infancy is here taken in ſuch a ſenſe as agrees to a Chriſtian in the whole courſe, and beſt eſtate of his Spiritual life here below; and ſo likewiſe the *milk* here recommended is anſwerable to this ſenſe of Infancy, and not to the former; as 'tis in ſome of thoſe cited places, where it means the eaſieſt and firſt Principles of Religion, and ſo is oppos'd to the higher myſteries of it, as to ſtrong meat; but here it ſignifies the whole word of God, and all its wholeſome and ſaving truths, as the proper nouriſhment of the Children of God. And ſo the Apoſtles words are a ſtanding Exhortation for all Chriſtians of all degrees.

And the whole eſtate and courſe of their Spiritual life here, is called there Infancy, not only as op-

pos'd to Corruption and wickedneſs of the old man but likewiſe as ſignifying the weakneſs, and imperfection of it, at its beſt in this life, compar'd with the perfection of the life to come; for the weakeſt beginnings of grace, are nothing ſo far below the higheſt degree of it poſſible in this life, as that higheſt degree falls ſhort of the ſtate of glory; ſo that, if one meaſure of grace is called Infancy in reſpect of another, much more is all grace Infancy in reſpect of Glory. And ſure as for Time, the time of our preſent life is far leſs to eternity than the time of our natural Infancy is to the reſt of our life, ſo that we may be ſtill call'd but *new or lately born*, Our beſt pace and ſtrongeſt walking in obedience here, is but as the ſtepping of Children when they begin to go by hold, in compariſon of the perfect obedience in glory, when *we ſhall follow the Lamb whereſoever he goes*, all our knowledge here, is but the Ignorance of Infants, and all our expreſſions of God, and of his Praiſes but as the firſt ſtammerings of Children in compariſon of the knowledge we ſhall have of him hereafter, when *we ſhall know as we are known*, and of theſe praiſes we ſhall then offer him, when that new ſong ſhall be taught us. A Child hath in it a reaſonable ſoul, and yet by the indiſpoſedneſs of the body, and abundance of moyſture, it is ſo bound up, that its difference from the beaſts and partaking of a rational life is not ſo apparent as afterwards; and thus the ſpiritual life that is from above infus'd into a Chriſtian, though it doth act and work in ſome degree, yet is ſo clogg'd with natural corruption ſtill remaining in them that the excellency of it is that

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way much clouded and obscur'd, but in the life to come, it shall have nothing at all incumbring, and indisposing it, and this is the Apostle St. *Pauls* Doctrine. 1 *Cor.* 13. 9, 10, 11, 12.

And this is the wonder of Divine grace, that brings so small beginnings to that height of perfection that we are not able to conceive of; that a little sparkle of true grace, that is not only indiscernable to others, but often to a Christian himself, Yet should be the beginning of that condition, wherein they shall shine brighter then the Sun in the Firmament. The difference is great in our natural life, in some persons especially, that they that in Infancy were so feeble, and wrapt up as others in swadling cloaths, yet afterwards come to excel in wisdom and in the knowledge of sciences, or to be Commanders of great Armies, or to be Kings. But the distance is far greater and more admirable betwixt the weakness of these *New born babes*, the small beginnings of grace, and our after perfection, that fulness of knowledge that we look for, and that crown of Immortality, that all they are born to, that are born of God.

But as in some Childrens faces, or actions, have appear'd some characters, and presages of their after greatness, as a singular beauty in *Moses's* face as they write of him, and *Cyrus* made King among the Shepherds Children with whom he was brought up, *&c.* so also certainly in these children of God there be some Characters, and evidences, that they are born for Heaven by their new birth. That Holiness, and Meekness, that Patience, and Faith that shine in the actions and sufferings of the Saints, are Characters

ters of their Fathers Image, and ſhew their high Original, and foretel their glory to come, ſuch a glory as doth not only ſurpaſs the Worlds thoughts, but the thoughts of the Children of God themſelves. *1 Joh.* 3. 2.

Now that the Children of God may grow by the word of God, the Apoſtle requires theſe two things of them. 1. The Innocency of Children. 2. The appetite of Children. For this, As I conceive, is relative, not only, to the deſiring *the milk of the word*; but to the former *Verſe*, the *putting off malice.* as the Apoſtle *Paul*, 1 *Cor.* 14. 20. *as concerning malice, be ye children.*

wherefore laying aſide.] This imports, that we are naturally poſſeſs'd with theſe evils, therefore exhorted to put them off: our hearts are by nature no other but cages of thoſe unclean birds, malice, envy, hypocriſie, *&c.* The Apoſtles ſometimes name ſome of theſe evils and ſometimes other of them: But they are inſeparable all one garment, and all comprehended under that one word, *Eph.* 4. *the old Man*, which the Apoſtle there exhorts to put off: And here 'tis preſs'd as a neceſſary evidence of their New birth, and furtherance of their Spiritual growth, that theſe baſe habits be thrown away, ragged filthy habits, unbeſeeming the Children of God; they are the proper marks of an unrenewed mind, the very Characters of the Children of Satan, for they are his Image. He hath his names from enmity, and envy and ſlandering, and he is that grand hypocrite, and deceiver that can *transform himſelf into an Angel of Light.*

So on the contrary the Spirit of God, that dwells

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In his Children is the ſpirit of meekneſs, and Love, and Truth. That dove-like ſpirit that deſcended on our Saviour, is from him communicated to Believers. 'Tis the groſſeſt impudency to pretend to be a Chriſtian, and yet to entertain hatred, and envyings upon whatſoever occaſion, for there is nothing more recommended to them by our Saviour's own doctrine, and more impreſt upon their hearts by his ſpirit than love. Kaia may be taken generally, but I conceive tis that which we particularly call *malice*.

Malice, and envy are but two branches growing out of the ſame bitter root, ſelf-love and evill ſpeakings are the fruit they bear. Malice is properly the procuring or wiſhing anothers evil; Envy the repining at their good, and theſe vent themſelves by evil ſpeaking. This infernall fire within ſmoaks, and flaſhes out by the tongue which S. *James* ſayes *is ſet on fire of hell*, and fires all about it miſcenſuring the actions of thoſe they hate or envy, aggravating their failings, and detracting from their vertues, taking all things by the left Ear, for (as *Epictetus* ſayes) *Every thing hath two handles*, The art of taking things by the better ſide, which charity alwayes doth, would ſave much of thoſe janglings, and heart burnings that ſo abound in the world. But folly and perverſeneſs poſſeſs the hearts of the moſt, and therefore their diſcourſes are uſually the vent of thoſe: *For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth muſt ſpeak*. The unſavory breaths of Men, argues their inward corruption: Where ſhall a Man come almoſt in ſocieties, but his ears ſhall be beaten with the unpleaſant noiſe (ſure 'tis ſo to a Chriſtian mind) of one detracting, and diſparaging another: And yet this is extreme baſe-

neſs, and the practice only of falſe counterfeit goodneſs, to make up his own eſteem out of the ruines of the good name of others; real vertue cannot endure, nor needs not that diſhoneſt ſhift: It can ſubſiſt of it ſelf, and therefore ingenuouſly commends and acknowledges what good is in others, and loves to hear it acknowledged, and neither readily ſpeaks nor hears evil of any, but rather, where duty and conſcience require not diſcovery, caſts a vail upon Mens failings to hide them, this is the true temper of the Children of God.

Theſe evils of *Malice*, and *envy*, and *evil-ſpeakings*, and ſuch like, are not to be diſſembled by us in our ſelves, and conveyed under better appearances: But to be caſt away, not to be covered, but put off, and therefore that which is the upper garment and cloak of all other evills the Apoſtle here commands to caſt that off too namely, *hypocriſie*.

What availes it to wear this mask, a Man may indeed in the ſight of Men act his part handſomely under it, and paſs ſo for a time; but know we not? There is an eye that ſees through it, and a hand, that if we will not put of this mask, will pull it off to our ſhame either here in the ſight of men, or if we ſhould ſcape all our life, and go fair off the ſtage under it; yet there is a day appointed wherein all hypocrites ſhall be unvail'd, and appear what they are indeed before Men and Angels; 'tis a poor thing to be approved, and applauded by Men while God condemns, to whoſe ſentence all men muſt ſtand or fall. Oh ſeek to be approved, and juſtified by him, and then *who ſhall condemn?* 'Tis no matter who do. How eaſily may we bear the miſtakes and diſlikes of

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all the world, if he declare himself well-pleas'd with us. *It is a small thing for me to be judged of Man or mans day, he that judgeth me is the Lord.* Saith the Apostle,

But these evils are here particularly to be put off, as contrary to the right and profitable receiving of the word of God, for this part of the exhortation [*Laying aside, Desire*] look's to that which follows, and is specially so to be considered.

There is this double task in Religion. When a Man enters to it, he is not only to be taught true wisdom, but he is withall, yea, first of all, to be untaught the Errours and wickedness that are deep rooted in his mind, which he hath not only learn'd by the corrupt conversation of the world, but brought the seeds of them into the world with him, and they improve and grow indeed by the favour of that example that is round about a Man: But they are orginally in our nature as it is now, they are connaturall to us, besides continuall custome which is another nature. There is none comes to the School of Christ sukting the Philosopher's word *ut tabulæ rasæ*, as blank paper to receive his doctrine, but on the contrary all scribl'd, and blurr'd with such base habits as these, *malice, hypocrisie, envy, &c.*

Therefore the first work is to raze out these, to cleanse and purifie the heart from these blotts, those foul characters, that it may receive the impression of the image of God. And because it is the word of God, that both begins, and followes forth this work, draws the lineaments of that divine Image on the soul, therefore to the receiving this word aright, and this proper effect by it, the conforming of the soul to

Jesus Christ, which is the true growth of the spiritual life, this is prerequir'd that the hearts of them that hear it, be purged of these such and like impurities, *malice, hypocrisie &c.*

These are so opposite to the profitable receiving of the word of God, that while they possess and rule the soul, it cannot at all embrace those divine truths; While it is fill'd with such guests, there is no room to entertain the word.

They cannot dwell together by reason of their contrary nature, the word will not mixe with these; the saving mixture of the word of God in the soul, is that the Apostle speaks of, and gives the want of it, as the cause of unprofitable hearing the word. *Heb.* 4. 2. *the mixing of it with faith.* For by that the word is concocted into the nourishment of the life of grace united to the soul, and mix'd with it by being mix'd with faith, as the Apostle's expression imports: That's the proper mixture it requires, but with these qualities here mention'd it will not mix: There is a naturall antipathy betwixt them, as strong as in those things in nature, that cannot be brought by any means, to agree and mingle together.

Can there be any thing more contrary than the *good word of God*, as the Apostle calls it, and those *evil speakings?* Than the word that is of such excellent sweetness, and the bitter words of a malignant tongue? Than the word of life, and words full of deadly poyson? For so slanders and diffamings of our brethren are. And is not all *malice*, and *envy* most opposite to the word, that is the message of *peace* and *Love*, how can the gall of *malice* and this *milk* of the word agree? Hypocrisie and guile stand in direct opposition to the name

name of this word, that is called the *word of truth* and here the very words ſhew this contrariety *ſincere milk* and a *double unſincere mind.*

Theſe two are neceſſary conditions of good nouriſhment. 1. That the food be good, and wholeſome. 2. That the inward conſtitution of them that uſe it be ſo too: And if this fail the other profit's not. This ſincere milk is the only proper nouriſhment of ſpiritual Life, and there is no defect nor undue quality in it, but the greateſt part of hearers are inwardly unwholeſom, diſeas'd with the evils here mention'd and others of the like nature, and therefore, either have no kind of appetite to the word at all; but rather feed upon ſuch traſh as ſuite with their diſtemper, as ſome kind of diſeaſes incline thoſe that have them, to eat Coales, or Lime, *&c.* Or if they be any wayes deſirous to hear the Word, and ſeem to feed on it, yet the noxious humours that abound in them make it altogether unprofitable, and they are not nouriſh'd by it; as this evill of malice, and envying ſo ordinary among Men, and (which is moſt ſtrange amongſt Chriſtians) as an overflowing of the Gaul poſſeſſes their whole minds, and not only they are not nouriſh'd by the word they hear, but are the worſe by it, their diſeaſe is fed by it, as an unwholſom ſtomach turns the beſt meat it receives into that bad humour that abounds in it: Do not they thus, that obſerve what the Word ſayes, that they may be the better inabled to diſcover the failings of others, and ſpeak malitiouſly and uncharitablely of them, and vent themſelves, as is too common? *This word met well with ſuch a one's Fault, and this with anothers:* Is not this to feed theſe diſeaſes of *Malice, Envy, and evill.*

evill-ſpeakings with this *pure milk*, and make them grow, in ſtead of growing by it our ſelves in grace and holineſs.

Thus likewiſe the hypocrite turnes all that he hears of this word, not to the inward renovation of his mind, and redreſſing what's amiſſe there: But only to the compoſing of his outward carriage, and to inable himſelf to act his part better to be cunninger in his own faculty, a more refin'd and expert hypocrite, not to grow more a Chriſtian in deed, but more in appearance only and in the opinion of others.

Therefore it is a very needfull advertiſment ſeeing theſe evils are ſo natural to Men, and ſo contrary to the nature of the word of God, that they be purg'd out, to the end it may be profitably receiv'd: A very like exhortation to this hath the Apoſtle S. *James* and ſome of the ſame words but in another Metaphor *Jam.* 1. 21. *Wherefore lay apart all filthineſs and ſuperfluity of naughtineſs*, and *receive with meekneſs the ingrafted word.* He compares the word to a plant of excellent vertue, the very tree of life, the word that is able to ſave your ſouls, but the only ſoyle wherein it will grow is a heart full of meekneſs, a heart that is purg'd of thoſe Luxuriant weeds that grow ſo rank in it by nature; they pluck up and throw them out to make place for this word.

And there is ſuch a neceſſity of this, that the moſt approv'd teachers of wiſdom, in a human way, have requir'd this of their Scholars that to the end their minds might be capable of it, they ſhould be purified from vice, and wickedneſs; for this reaſon the Philoſopher judges young Men unfit hearers of morall

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Philoſophy becauſe of the abounding, and untamedneſs of their paſſions, granting that if thoſe were compoſ'd, and order'd, that they might be admitted. And it was *Socrates* his cuſtome, when any ask'd him a queſtion to be inform'd by him, before he would anſwer them, he ask't them concerning their own qualities, and courſe of life.

Now if Men require a calm and purified diſpoſition of mind to make it capable of their doctrine, how much more is it ſutable, and neceſſary for learning the doctrine of God, and thoſe deep myſteries that his word opens up, 'tis well expreſſ'd in that Apocryphal Book of wiſdome, *that forward thoughts ſeparate from God, and wiſdom enters not into a malitious ſoul*, no indeed, that's a very unfit dwelling for it, and the very Heathen could ſay *the mind that is impure is not capable of God, and divine things. Seneca.* Therefore we ſee the ſtrain of that book of *Proverbs*, that ſpeaks ſo much of this wiſdom, it requires in the firſt *chap.* That they that would hear it, do retire themſelves from all ungodly cuſtomes and practices. And indeed how can the ſoul apprehend ſpirituall things, that is not in ſome meaſure refin'd from the love of ſin, that abuſes and bemires the minds of Men, and makes them unable to ariſe to heavenly thoughts? *Bleſſed are the pure in heart for they ſhall ſee God*, ſayes our Saviour, not only ſhall they ſee him perfectly hereafter, but, as they can receive him, he will impart and make known himſelf unto them here, ſo *John.* 14. 23. This is it that makes the word obſcure namely, the filthy miſts within, whereas on the contrary he will in juſt judgement hide himſelf, and the ſaving truth of his

word

word from those that entertain and delight in sin: The very sins, wherein they delight shall obscure and darken the light of the Gospel to them, that though it shine clear as the Sun at noon-day, they shall be as those that live in a dungeon, they shall not discern it.

And as they receive no benefit by the word that have these evils here mention'd reigning, and in full strength in them, so they that are indeed born again, the more they retain of these, the less shall they find the influence, and profit of the word; for this exhortation concernes them, they may possibly some of them have much remainder of these corruptions unmortified, therefore exhorted to lay aside intirely those evils, *all malice*, *all hypocrisie &c.* And so though they hear the word often, yet be in a spirituall Atrophy, eat much, and grow nothing by it, find no increase of grace, and spirituall strength.

Would we know the main cause of our fruitless hearing of the word, here it is, Men bring not meek and guiles spirits to it, not minds emptied and purified to receive it, but stuff'd with *Malice*, and *Hypocrisie*, and *Pride*, and other such evils, and where should the Word enter, when all is so taken up? And if it did enter how should it prosper amongst so many enemies? Or at all abide amongst them, either they will turn it out again, or choak and kill the the power of it. We think Religion and our own Lusts, and secret heart-Idols should agree together, because we would have it so, but this is not possible, either therefore labour to entertain the word of Truth in the love of it, and lodge the mystery of Faith *in a pure conscience*, as the Apostle St. *Paul* speaks,

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Joyn those together with *David*, *Psal.* 119 113. *I hate vain thoughts; but thy Law do I love.* And as here our Apostle, *Lay aside all malice, and hypocrisie, and envy, and evil speakings*, and so receive the Word, or else look for no benefit by it here, nor for salvation by it hereafter but cast out all impurity, and give your whole heart to it, so desire it, that you may grow, and then as you desire, you shall grow by it.

Every real Believer hath receiv'd a life from Heaven, far more excelling our natural life, than that excels the life of the Beasts. And this life hath its own peculiar desires, and delights, that are the proper actings and the certain characters and evidence of it; amongst others, this is one and a main one, answerable to the like desire in natural life, namely, a desire of food, and because 'tis here still imperfect, therefore the natural end of this, isnot only nourishment, but growth, as 'tis here express'd.

The sincere Milk of the word] The Life of grace is the proper life of a reasonable soul, and without it, the soul is dead, as the body is without the soul: so that without untruth, this may be rendered, *reasonable milk*, as some read it, but certainly that reasonable milk is the Word of God, *The milk of the Word.*

It was before call'd the immortal seed, and here 'tis the milk of those that are born again, and thus it is very agreeable nourishment to that spiritual life according to their saying, *iisdem alimur ex quibus constamus*, as the milk that Infants draw from the breast, is most connatural food to them, being of

that ſame ſubſtance that nouriſh'd them in the womb. But when they are brought forth, that food followes them as it were for their ſupply, in that way that is provided in nature for it, by certain veins it aſcends into the breaſts, and is there fitted for them, and they by nature directed to find it there. Thus as a Chriſtian begins to live by the power of the word, he is by the nature of that ſpiritual life directed to that ſame word as its nouriſhment. To follow the reſemblance further in the qualities of milk, after the Monkiſh way, that runs it ſelf out of breath in an Allegory, I conceive, is neither ſolid nor profitable, and to ſpeak freely, the curious ſearching of the ſimilitude in other qualities of milk, ſeems to wrong the quality here given it by the Apoſtle, in which it is ſo well reſembl'd by milk, namely, the ſimple pureneſs and ſincerity of the word; beſides that the preſſing of compariſons of this kind too far, proves often ſo conſtrain'd ere they have done with it, that by too much drawing they bring forth blood in ſtead of milk.

Pure and *unmix'd*, as milk drawn immediately from the breſt; the pure word of God without the mixture not only of errour, but of all other compoſition of vain unprofitable ſubtilties, or affected humane eloquence, ſuch as become not the Majeſty and gravity of Gods word. *If any man ſpeak*, ſayes our Apoſtle, *let him ſpeak as the Oracles of God*; light conceits and Flowers of Rhetorick wrong the word more than they can pleaſe the hearers, the weeds among the Corn make it look gay, but it were all the better they were not amongſt it.

Nor

Nor can those mixtures be pleasing to any but carnal minds, they that are indeed the Children of God (as Infants who like their brest milk best pure) do love the word best so, and whersoever they find it so, they relish it well, whereas Natural Men cannot love Spiritual things for themselves, desire not the word for its own sweetness, but would have it sauc'd with such conceits as possibly spoyl the simplicity of it, or at the best love to hear it for the witt, and learning, which without any wrongful mixture of it, they find in one delivering it more than another, but the Natural and Genuine appetite of the Children of God, is to the word, for it self; and only as milk, *sincere milk*. And where they find it so, from whomsoever, or in what way soever deliver'd unto them, they feed upon it with delight: before conversion Witt or Eloquence may draw a Man to the Word, and possibly prove a happy bait to catch him, as St. *Augustin* reports of his hearing St. *Ambrose*, but once born again, then 'tis the Milk it self they desire for it self.

Desire the sincere milk.] Not only hear it because it is your custom, but desire it because it is your food, and 'tis 1. A natural desire, as the Infants of milk, not upon any external respect or inducement, but from an inward Principle and bent of nature, and because natural, therefore, 2. Earnest not a cold indifferent willing, that cares not whether it obtain or no, but a vehement desire, as the word signifies, and the resemblance clearly bears, as a child that will not be still'd till it have the breast; offer it what you will, Silver, Gold, or Jewels it regards them not, these answer not its desire, and

that must be answered. Thus *David My soul breaketh for the longing it hath to thy judgements*; As a Child like to break its heart with crying for want of the Breast: And again because natural 'tis 3. Constant, the Infant is not cloy'd, nor weary-ed with daily feeding on the breast, but desires it every day, as if it had never had it before; thus the Child of God, hath an unchangeable apperite for the word, 'tis daily new to him, he finds still fresh delight in it, thus *David* as before cited, *My Soul breaketh for the longing it hath for thy judgements at all times*, And then *Psal.* 1. this Law was *his Meditation day and night.* Whereas a Natural Man is easily surfeited of it, and the very commonness and cheapness of it makes it contemptible to him. And this is our case, that wherein we should wonder at Gods singular goodness to us, and therefore prize his Word the more, that very thing makes us despise it: Whereas others our Brethren have bought this milk with their own Blood, we have it upon the easiest terms that can be wish'd, only for the desiring, without hazard of bleeding for it, and scarce at the pains of sweating for it.

That ye may grow thereby] This is not only the end for which God hath provided his Children with the Word, and moves them to desire it, but which they are to intend in their desire and use of it, and answerable to Gods purpose, they are therefore to desire it, because it is proper for this end, and that by it they may attain this end, *to grow thereby.* And herein indeed these Children differ from Infants in the Natural life, that are directed to their food beside their knowledge, and without intention of its

its end; but this *rational milk*, is to be desir'd by the Children of God in a rational way, knowing and intending its end, having the use of Natural reason renew'd, and sanctifi'd by supernatural grace.

Now the end of this desire is growth. Desire the Word not that you may only hear it, that is to fall very far short of its true end, Yea, 'tis to take the beginning of the work for the end of it; the Ear is indeed the mouth of the mind, by which it receives the Word, as *Elihu* compares it, (*Job.* 34. 2.) but meat that goes no further than the Mouth (you know) cannot nourish. Neither ought this desire of the Word to be only to satisfie a custom, 'twere an exceeding folly to make so superficial a thing the end of so serious a work. Again, to hear it only to stop the Mouth of Conscience, that it may not clamour more for gross impiety in contempt of it, this is not to hear it out of desire, but out of fear; to desire it only for some present pleasure, and delight that a man may find in it, is not the due use and end of it; that there is delight in it, may help to commend it to those that find it so, and so be a meanes to advance the end, but the end it is not. To seek no more but a present delight that evanisheth with the sound of the words, that dye in the air, is not to desire the Word as Meat, but as Musick, as God tells the Prophet *Ezekiel* of his People. *Ezek.* 33. 32. *And lo, thou art unto them as a very lovely Song of one that hath a pleasant voyce, and can play well on an Instrument, for they hear thy words, and they do them not.* To desire the Word for the increase of knowledge (although this is necessary and commend-

commendable, and being rightly qualified is a part of ſpiritual accretion, (yet take it as going no further) it is not the true end of the Word, nor the venting of that knowledge in ſpeech and frequent diſcourſe of the Word, and the Divine truths that are in it; which, where it is govern'd with Chriſtian Prudence, is not to be deſpiſ'd, but commended; yet certainly the higheſt knowledge, and the frequenteſt, and skilfulleſt ſpeaking of the Word ſever'd from the growth here mention'd miſſes the true end of the Word. If any one's Head or Tongue ſhould grow apace, and all the reſt ſtand at a ſtay, it would certainly make him a Monſter; and they are no other, that are knowing and diſcourſing Chriſtians, and grow daily in that, but not at all in holineſs of heart, and life, which is the proper growth of the Children of God. *Epictetus* his compariſon of the ſheep, they return not what they eat, in graſs; but in Wool. *David* in that 119. *Pſalm* that is wholly ſpent upon this ſubject, the excellency and uſe of the Word of God, expreſſeth *Verſe* 11, 6. his delight in it, his earneſt deſire to be further taught, and to know more of it, his readineſs to ſpeak of it, *Verſe* 13, 27. but withal you know he joynes his deſire and care *to keep it, to hide it in his heart*, &c. *Pſal.* 119. *Verſe* 11, 5, 24. To make it the *Man of his Counſel*, to be as the whole Aſſembly of his privy Counſellors, and to be ruled and guided by it, and with him, to uſe it ſo, is indeed to grow by it.

If we know what this Spiritual life is, and wherein the nature of it conſiſts we may eaſily know what is the growth of it, when holineſs increaſes, the ſanctifying graces of the Spirit grow ſtronger in the ſoul,

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and consequently act more strongly in the life of a Christian, then he growes Spiritually.

And as the word is the means of begetting this Spiritual life, so likewise of its increase.

1. If we consider the nature of the Word in general, that it is Spiritual and Divine, treats of the highest things, and therefore hath in it a fitness to elevate Mens minds from the Earth, being often conversant with it to assimilate them to it self, as all kind of Doctrine readily doth to these that are much in it, and apply their minds to study it. Doubtless such kind of things as are frequent with Men, have an influence into the disposition of their souls. The Gospel is called *Light*, and the Children of God are likewise called *Light*, as being transform'd into its nature, and thus they are still the more, by more hearing of it, and so they grow.

If we look more particularly unto the strain and tenour of the Word, it is most fit for increasing the graces of the Spirit in a Christian; for there be in it particular truths relative to them, that are apt to excite them, and set them on work, and so to make them grow, as all habits do, by acting; it doth (as the Apostles word may be translated) *stir up the sparks*, and blow them into a greater flame, makes them burn clearer and hotter. That it doth both by particular Exhortation to the study and Exercise of those graces, sometimes pressing one, and sometimes another; and by right representing to them their objects. The Word feeds faith by setting before it the free grace of God, his Rich Promises, and his Power, and truth to perform them all, shews it the strength of the New Covenants, not

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depending upon it, but holding in Christ, in whom all the Promises of God, are *Yea*, and *Amen*, and drawing faith still to rest more intirely upon his *Righteousness*. It feeds Repentance by making the vileness and deformity of sin daily more clear, and visible; still as more of the Word hath admission into the Soul, the more it hates sin, being the more discovered, and the better known in its own native colour. As the more light is in a House, the more any thing in it that is uncleanly or deformed is seen, and dislik'd.

Likewise it increaseth love to God by opening up still more and more of his infinite Excellency and lovelyness, and as it borrowes the resemblance of the vilest things in nature to express the foulness and hatefulness of sin, so all the beauties and dignities that are in all the creatures are call'd together in the Word, to give us some small scantling of that uncreated beauty, that alone deserves to be loved. Thus might it be instanc'd in all other graces.

But above all other Considerations, this is in the Word observable, as the increaser of grace, in that it holds forth Jesus Christ to our view to look upon, not only as the perfect pattern, but as the full fountain of all grace, from whose fulness we all receive the contemplating of him, as the perfect Image of God, and then drawing from him as having in himself a treasure for us, these give the soul more of that Image, which is truly Spiritual growth. This the Apostle expresseth excellently, 2 *Cor.* 3. ult. speaking of the Ministry of the Gospel, revealing Christ that *beholding in him*, as 'tis *Chap.* 4. *Vers.* 6. *In his face the glory of the Lord, we are changed into the same*

same image from glory to glory, as by the Spirit of the Lord. Not only that we may take the Copy of his Graces, but have a share of them.

There be many things might be said of this spirituall growth, but I will add only a few. 1. In the judging of this growth, some concluding too rigidly against themselves, that they grow not by the word, because it is not sensible to them as they desire.

But 1. this is known in all things that grow, that 'tis not discerned in *motu fed in termino*, not in the growing, but when they are grown. 2. Besides other things are to be considered in this, although other graces seem not to advance, yet if thou groweſt more self-denying, and humble in the sense of thy slowness, all is not lost, although the branches shut not up so fast as thou wisheſt, yet if the root grow deeper, and fasten more, its an usefull growth, he that is still learning to be more in Jesus Christ, and less in himself, to have all his dependance, and comfort in him, is doubtless a growing believer.

On the other side a far greater number conclude wrong in their own favour, imagining that they do grow, if they gain in some of those things we mention'd above, namely, if more knowledge, and more faculty of discoursing, if they find often some present stirrings of joy, or sorrow in hearing of the word, if they reform their life, grow more civil, and blameless *&c.* Yet all these and many such things may be in a naturall Man, who notwithstanding grows not, for that's impossible, he is not in that estate a subject capable of this growth, for he is dead, he hath none of this new life to which this growth relates. *Herod* heard gladly and obey'd many things.

Consider then what true delight we might have in this. You find a pleasure, when you see your Children grow, when they begin to stand and walk &c. You love well to perceive your estate, or your honour grow, but the soul to be growing liker God and nearer heaven, if we know it, is a pleasure far beyond them all, to find pride and Earthlinesse and vanity abating, and faith, and love, and spiritnall mindedness increasing, especially if we think whither this growth be not as our naturall life that is often cutt off before it attain full age as we call it, and if it attain that, falls again to move downwards and decays, as the Sun, being at its Meridian begins to decline again: But this life shall grow on in whomsoever it is, and come certainly to its fullness, after which there is no more need of this word either for growth or nourishment, no death, no decay, no old age, but perpetuall youth and a perpetuall spring *ver æternum, fulness of joy in the presence of God and everlasting pleasures at his right hand.*

Verse 3.

If so be ye have tasted that the Lord is Gracious.

OUR Naturall desire of food, arises principally from its necessity, for that end which nature seeks, the growth or at least the nourishment of our bodies, but besides, there is a present sweetness, and pleasing-

pleasingness in the use of it, that serves to sharpen our desire, and is plac'd in nature for that purpose; thus the Children of God in their spiritual life are naturally carried to desire the means of their nourishment and of their growth, being alwayes here in a growing estate; but withall, there is a spiritual delight and sweetness in that word, in that which it reveals concerning God, and that addes to their desire, stirres their appetite towards it, the former is in the foregoing *verse*, the latter in this. Nature addresses the infant to the breast, but when it hath once tasted of it, that is a new superadded attractive, and makes it desire after that the more earnestly: So here.

The word is fully recommended to us by these two, usefulness, and pleasantness, so like milk (as 'tis compar'd here) which is a nourishing food, and withall sweet and delightfull to the taste, by it we grow, and in it we taste the graciousness of God. *David* in that *Psalm* that he dedicates wholly to this subject, gives both these as the reason of his appetite, his love to it he expresses patheticaly. *Psa.* 119, *Ver.* 97. *O how love I thy law?* and then he addes, that by it *he was made wiser than his enemies, than his teachers.* And *than the ancients*, taught to refraine from every evil way, taught by the Author of that word the Lord himself, thou hast taught me to grow wiser and wiser, and holier in thy wayes, and then *Ver.* 103. He addes this other reason, *How sweet are thy words unto my taste, yea sweeter than the hony and the hony Comb.*

We shall speak 1. Of the goodness or graciousness of the Lord. 2. Of this taste. And 3. Of the Inference from both.

1. *Gracious*] Or of a bountifull kind disposition, the word *Psa.* 34. Whence this is taken is *Tob.* And which signifieth, *good.* The *Sept* there render it by the word used here by our Apostle, both the words signifie a benignity, and kindness of nature, it is one of loves attributes 1 *Cor.* 13. It is kind, ever compassionate, and as it can be helpfull in straits, and distresses still ready to forget, and pass by evil and to do good, and in the largest most comprehensive sense must we take it here, and yet still speak, and think infinitely below what his goodness is. He is naturally good; yea goodness in his nature, he is goodness and love it self, *he that loveth not knoweth not God, for God is love.* 1 *Jo.* 4. 8. Primitively good, all goodness is deriv'd from him, and all that is in the Creature comes forth from no other but that Ocean, and this graciousness is still larger then them all.

There is a common bounty of God wherein he doth good to all, and so *the whole earth is full of of his goodness*: But the goodness that the Gospel is full of, the particular stream that runs in that channel, is his peculiar graciousness, and love to his own Children; that by which they are first enliven'd, and then refresh'd, and sustain'd in their spiritual being. This that is here spoken of, gracious to them in freely forgiving their sins, and giving no less than him self unto them, frees them from all evils, and fills them with all good. *Psa.* 103. 3. 4. 5. *Satisfies thy mouth*, and so it followes with good reason, *Ver.* 8 that he is *mercifull and gracious*, and his graciousness there further express'd in his gentleness, and slowness to anger, bearing with the frailties

of his own, and pitying them, as a father pityeth his Children.

No friend so kind and friendly (as this word signifies) and none so powerfull, a present help in trouble, ready to be found, whereas others may be far off, he is alwayes at hand, and his presence is alwayes comfortable.

They that know God, still find him a real usefull good. Some things and persons are usefull at one time, and others at another, but God at all times. A well furnish'd table may please a Man, while he hath health and appetite; but offer it to him in the hight of a fever, how unpleasant would it be then? Though never so richly deck'd, 'tis not only then useless, but hateful to him: But the kindness and love of God is then as seasonable, and refreshing to him, as in health, and possibly more; he can find sweetness in that, even on his sick bed. The bitter Choler abounding in the mouth in a fever doth not distrelish his sweetness, it transcends and goes above it. Thus all Earthly enjoyments have but some time (as meats) when they are in season but the graciousness of God is always sweet, the tast of that is never out of season. See how old age spoyles the relish of outward delights in the example of *Barzillai* 2. *Sam.* 19, 35. But it makes not this distastful; therefore the *Psalmist* prayes, that when other comforts forsake him, and wear out, ebb from him, and leave him on the sand, this may not. That still he may feed on the goodness of God *Psa.* 71. 9. *Cast me not off in old age, forsake me not when my strength faileth.* 'Tis the continual influence of his graciousness makes them still grow like *Cedars in Lebanon*, *Psa.* 92. *To bring forth*

fruit

fruit in old age to be still fat, and flourishing, to shew that the Lord is upright, as is there added, that he is even (as the word is) *still like himself*, and his goodness ever the same.

Full chests, or large possessions, may seem sweet to a Man, till death present it self; but then, as the Prophet speaks of *throwing away their idols of silver and gold to the Bats, and Moles, in the day of calamity*, then he is forc'd to throw all he possesses away with disdain of it, and his former folly in doting on it, then the kindness of friends and Wife, and Children can do nothing, but increase his grief, and their own: But then is the love of God the good indeed and abiding sweetness. And it best relisheth when all other things are most unsavoury, and uncomfortable. God is gracious, but its God in Christ, otherwise, we cannot find him so; therefore here this is spoken particular of Jesus Christ (as it appears by that which followeth) through whom all the peculiar kindness, and love of God, is convey'd to the soul, and can come no other way, and the word here mention'd is the *Gospel* Chap. 1. *Ver.* ult whereof Christ is the subject. Though God is Mercy, and Goodness in himself; yet we cannot find, nor apprehend him so to us; but only looking through that medium, the Mediator.

That main point of the goodness of God in the Gospel, that is so sweet to a humbled sinner, the forgiveness of sins, we know we cannot taste of, but in Christ *Eph.* 1. 7. In whom we have Redemption. And all the favour that shines on us, all the grace we receive, is of his fullness, all our acceptance with God, taking into grace, and kindness again, is

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in him, *Ver. 6. He made us accepted in the beloved.* His grace appears in both, as tis there expreſs'd, but it is all in Chriſt. Let us therefore never leave him out, in our deſires of taſting the graciouſneſs and love of God: For otherwiſe, we ſhall but diſhonour him, and diſappoint our ſelves.

The free grace of God was given to be taſted, in the promiſes, before the coming of Chriſt in the fleſh: But being accompliſh'd in his coming, then was the ſweetneſs of grace made more ſenſible: Then was it more fully broacht, and let out to the Elect world when he was pierc'd on the Croſs, and his blood poured out for our redemption. *Through thoſe holes of his wounds may we draw, and taſte that the Lord is gracious* ſayes S. *Auguſt.*

2. *Taſte*] There is a taſting of temporary believers ſpoke of *Heb. 6. 4.* Their higheſt ſenſe of ſpirituall things (and it will be in ſome far higher than we eaſily think) yet is but a taſte, and is call'd ſo in compariſon of the truer fuller ſenſe, that true believers have of the grace, and goodneſs of God which compar'd with temporary taſte, is more than taſting, the former is taſting, rather an imaginary taſt then real, but this is a true feeding on the gracionſneſs of God, yet call'd but a taſt in reſpect of the fulneſs to come, though it is more than a taſt, as you difference it from the hypocrites ſenſe, yet 'tis no more but a taſt compar'd with the great marriage feaſt we look for.

Jeſus Chriſt, being *all in all* unto the ſoul, faith apprehending him, is all the ſpirituall ſenſes, it is the eye that beholds his matchleſs beauty, and ſo enkindles love in the ſoul, and can ſpeak of him as

him

having seen him, and taken particuliar notice of him. *Cant.* 5. 9. 'Tis the eare that discernes his voyce. *Cant.* 2. 8. 'Tis faith that smells *his name powred forth as an ointment*, faith it touches him and draws vertue from him, and faith that tastes him. *Cant.* 2. 3. And here *If ye have tasted, &c.*

There must be, 1. a firme believing the truth of the promises, wherein the free Grace of God is expresst, and exhibited to us. 2. A particular application, or attraction of that grace to our selves, which is as the *drawing those breasts of consolation*, namely the promises contain'd in the old and new Testament. 3. There is a sense of the sweetnes of that grace, being applied or drawn in to the soul, and that is properly this tast. No unrenewed Man hath any of these in truth, not the highest kind of temporary believer, he cannot have so much as a real lively assent to the generall truth of the promises, for had he that, the rest would follow, but as he cannot have the least of these in truth, he may have the counterfit of them all, not only of assent, but application, yea, and a false spiritual joy arising on it, and all these so drawn to the life, that they may resemble much the truth of them, and to give clear characters of difference is not so easie as most imagine; but doubtless, the true living faith of a Chiristian, hath in it self, such a particular stamp, as brings with it, its own evidence, when the soul is clear, and the light of Gods face shines upon it: Indeed in the dark, we cannot read, nor distinguish one mark from another but when a Christian hath light to look upon the work of God in his own soul, although he cannot make another sensible of that by which

which he knows it, yet he himself is ascertain'd, and can say confidently in himself, this I know, that this faith and tast of God I have is true, the seal of the spirit of God is upon it, and this is the reading of that *new name, in the white stone, that no Man knowes, but he that hath it.* There is in a true Believer such a constant love to God, for himself, and continual desire after him, simply for his own excellency, and goodness, that no other can have. On the other side, would an Hypocrite deal truly and impartialy by himself, he would readily find out something that would discover him, more, or less to himself: but the truth is, Men are willing to deceive themselves and thence arises the difficulty.

One Man cannot make another sensible of the sweetness of Divine Grace, he may speak to him of it very excellently, but all he sayes in that kind is an unknown language to a natural Man, he hath many good words, but he cannot tell what they mean. *The natural Man tastes not the things of God, for they are spiritually discern'd.*

A Spiritual Man himself doth not fully conceive this sweetness that he tastes of, 'tis an infinite Goodness, and he hath but a taste of it, the *Peace of God* is a main fruit of this his goodness, *it passeth all understanding*, sayes the Apostle, not only all natural understanding as some modifie it; but all understanding, even the supernatural understanding of those that enjoy it, and as the Godly Man cannot conceive it all, so that which he conceives, he cannot express it all, and that which he doth express, the carnal mind cannot conceive of it by his expression.

But he that hath indeed tasted of this goodness,

O how taſtleſs are thoſe things to him, that the World call's ſweet, as when you have taſted ſomewhat that is very ſweet, it diſreliſheth other things after it. Therefore can a Chriſtian ſo eaſily either want, or uſe with diſregard the delights of this earth. His heart is not upon them; for the delight that he finds in it God carryeth it unſpeakably away from all the the reſt, makes them in compariſon ſeem ſapleſs to his taſt.

Salomon taſted of all the delicacies, the choiſeſt diſhes that are in ſuch eſteem amongſt Men, and not only taſted, but eat largly of them, and yet ſee how he goes over them, to let us know what they are, and paſſes from one diſh to another, *this alſo is vanity*, and of the next *this alſo is vanity*, and ſo through all, and of all in general, *All is vanity and vexation of Spirit*, or *feeding on the Wind*, as the word may be rendred.

3. We come in the third place to the *Inference*. *If ye have taſted*, &c. Then *lay aſide all Malice and guile and Hipocriſies and Envies, and all evil ſpeakings*, *Verſe* 1. For it looks back to the whole *Exhortation*; ſure if you have taſted of that kindneſs and ſweetneſs of God in Chriſt, it will compoſe your ſpirits, and conform them to him, it will diffuſe ſuch a ſweetneſs through your ſoul, that there will be no place for *malice and guile*. There will be nothing but love, and meekneſs, and ſingleneſs of heart, therefore they that have bitter malitious Spirits, evidence they have not taſted of the love of God, as the Lord is good, ſo they that taſte it are made like him, *Eph.* 4. 32. *Be ye kind one to another*

another, tender hearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ ſake hath forgiven you.

Again if ye have taſted, then deſire more, and this is the trueſt ſign of it; he that is in a continual hunger, and thirſt after this graciouſneſs of God, ſure he hath taſted of it. *My ſoul thirſteth for God,* (ſaith *David,*) he had taſted before, *Verſe* 4. he remembers that *he went to the houſe of God with the voice of Joy.*

This is that happy circle wherein the ſoul moves the more they love it, the more they ſhall taſt of this goodneſs; and the more they taſte, the more they ſhall ſtill love, and deſire it.

But obſerve, *if ye have taſted that the Lord is gracious,* then *deſire the milk of the Word.* This is the ſweetneſs of the *word,* that it hath in it the Lords graciouſneſs, gives us the knowledge of his love; this they find in it, that have Spiritual life and ſenſes and thoſe ſenſes exerciſ'd to diſcern good, and evil; and this engages a Chriſtian to further deſire of the Word: Theſe are fantaſtical deluding taſtes that draw Men from the writen Word, and make them expect other Revelations. This graciouſneſs is firſt conveyed to us, by the *word;* there we taſt it and therefore there ſtill we are to ſeek it; to hang upon thoſe breaſts that cannot be drawn dry, there the love of God, in Chriſt, ſtreames forth in the ſeveral promiſes; the heart that cleaves to the word of God, and delights in it, cannot but find in it daily new taſtes of his goodneſs, there it reads his love, and by that ſtirs up his own to him, and ſo growes, loves every day more than the former, and thus is tending from taſtes to fulneſs. 'Tis but little we can

receive, some drops of joy that enter into us, but there we shall enter into joy, as vessels put into a Sea of happiness.

Verse. 4, 5.

4. *To whom coming unto a living Stone disallowed indeed of men but chosen of God and pretious.*

5. *Ye also as lively Stones are built up a Spiritual, House, an holy Priesthood, to offer up Spiritual Sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.*

THe spring of all the dignities of a Christian, and therefore the great motives of all his duties, is, his near relation to Jesus Christ. Hence it is, that the Apostle makes that the great subject of his Doctrine, both to represent to his distress'd Brethren their Dignity in that, and to press by it, the necessary duties he exhorts unto. Having spoke of their Spiritual life, and growth in him, under the resemblance of natural life; he prosecutes it here, by another comparison very frequent in the Scriptures, and therefore makes use in it, of some passages of those Scriptures, that were Prophetical of Christ and his Church. Though there be here two different

different ſimilitudes, yet they have ſo near Relation one to another, and meet ſo well in the ſame ſubject, that he joynes them together, and then illuſtrates them ſeveraly in the following *Verſes*, *a Temple*, and a *Prieſthood*, comparing the Saints to both. The former in theſe words of this *Verſe*.

We have in it, 1. The nature of the building. 2. The materials of it. 3. The ſtructure or way of building it.

1. The nature is, *a ſpiritual building*. Time, and place (we know) receiv'd their being from God, and he was Eternaly before both, therefore ſtiled by the Prophet, *the high and loſty one that inhabiteth Eternity*: but having made the World, he fills it though not as contain'd in it, and ſo the whole frame of it is his Palace, or Temple; but after a more ſpecial manner, the higher and ſtatelier part of it, the higheſt Heaven; Therefore call'd, his *holy place and the habitation of his holineſs, and glory*; and on earth the houſes of his Publick Worſhip, are called *his houſes*; eſpecially the Jewiſh Temple in its time, having in it ſuch a relative typical holineſs, which others have not; but beſides all theſe, and beyond them all in excellency, he hath a houſe wherein he dwells more peculiarly than in any of the reſt: even more, than in Heaven, taken for the place only, and that is, this *ſpiritual building*. And this is moſt ſuitable to the nature of God, as our Saviour ſayes of the neceſſary conformity of his Worſhip to himſelf, *God is a ſpirit, and therefore will be worſhipped in ſpirit and in truth*. So it holds of his houſe, he muſt have a Spiritual one, becauſe he is a ſpirit, So Gods Temple, is his People.

And

And for this purpoſe chiefly did he make the world, the heaven, and the earth: That in it he might raiſe this ſpiritual building for himſelf to dwell in for ever, to have a number of his reaſonable creatures to enjoy him, and glorifie him in eternity; and from eternity he knew what the demenſions, and frame, and materials of it ſhould be. The continuance of this preſent world, as now it is, is but for the ſervice of this work, like the ſcaffolding about it; and therefore, when this Spiritual building ſhall be fully compleated, all the preſent frame of things in the world, and in the Church it ſelf, ſhall be taken away and appear no more.

This building, is, as the particular deſigning of its materials will teach us, *the whole inviſible Church of God*, and each good man is a ſtone of this building, but as the nature of it, is ſpiritual, it hath this priviledge, [as they ſpeak of the ſoul] that 'its *tota in toto & tota in quâlibet parte*, as the whole Church is the ſpouſe of Chriſt, and each believing ſoul hath the ſame title, and dignity to be called ſo, thus each of theſe ſtones is called a *whole Temple*, *Temples of the holy Ghoſt*, though taking the temple, or building in a compleater ſenſe, they are but each one a part, or a ſtone of it, as here it is expreſs'd.

The whole excellency of this building is compris'd in this, that 'tis called *ſpiritual*, differencing it from all other buildings, and preſerving it to them, and becauſe he ſpeaks immediately after, of a Prieſthood, and ſacrifices, it ſeems to be call'd a *ſpiritual building*, particularly in oppoſition to that material. Temple wherein the *Jews* gloried, which was now

Nul

Null in regard of its former uſe, and was wholly after deſtroyed: But when it ſtood, and the legal uſe of it ſtood in fulleſt vigour, yet in this ſtill it was inferiour, that it was not a ſpiritual houſe made up of living ſtones as this, but of a like matter with other earthly buildings.

The ſpiritual houſe is the palace of the great King, or his temple. The *Hebrew* word for palace, and temple, is one. Gods temple is a palace, and therefore muſt be full of the richeſt beauty, and magnificence: But ſuch as agrees with the nature of it, a ſpiritual beauty. In that *Pſalm* that wiſhes ſo many proſperities, one is that *their daughters may be, as corner ſtones, poliſhed after the ſimilitude of a palace*, thus is the Church, that is called the Kings daughter. *Pſa.* 45. but her comlineſs, is inviſible to the World. *She is all glorious within*, through ſorrowes, and Perſecutions, ſhe may be ſmoaky, and black to the World's eye, as the *tents of Kedar*: but in regard of Spiritual beauty, ſhe *is comely as the Curtains of* Salomon, and in this the Jewes Temple reſemble it right, which had moſt of its riches, and beauty in the inſide; Holineſs is the gold of this Spiritual houſe, and 'tis inwardly enrich'd with that.

The glory of the Church of God is not in ſtately buildings of Temples, and rich furniture, and Pompous ceremonies, theſe agree not with its Spiritual nature. Its true, and genuine beauty is, to grow in ſpiritualneſs, and ſo to be liker it ſelf, and have more of the preſence of God, and his Glory filling it, as a cloud, and it hath been obſerved, that the more the Church grew in outward riches and ſtate, the leſs ſhe grew, but abated ſenſibly in Spiri-

tuls

tual excellencies. But the Spiritualneſs of this building, will better appear in conſidering particularly the materials of it as here expreſs'd.

Now 2. The whole building is Chriſt myſticall; Chriſt together with the entire body of the Elect, he as the foundation, and they as the ſtones, built upon him: He the living ſtone, and they likewiſe by union with him livings ſtones He *having life in himſelf* as he ſpeaks, *John. 6.* And they deriving it from him, he primitively living, and they by participation: For therefore is he called here a *living ſtone*, not only, becauſe of his immortality, and glorious reſurrection, being *a lamb that was ſlain, and is alive again for ever:* But becauſe he is the principle of ſpiritual, and eternal life unto us, a living foundation that transfuſes this life into the whole building, and every ſtone of it, in whom (ſayes the Apoſtle *Eph.* 2.) *all the building is fitly framed together*: 'Tis the ſpirit that flows from him, which enliven's it, and knitts it together, as a living body, for the ſame word is us'd *chap.* 4. For the Church under the ſimilitude of a body. Now that 'its there ſaid, *Chap.* 2 *Ver.* 20. *to be built upon the foundation of the Prophets and Apoſtles*, is no other, but their doctrine, concerning Chriſt and therefore it is added, that he, as being the ſubject of their doctrine, is the *chief corner ſtone.* The foundation then of the Church lyes not in *Rome*, but in Heaven, and therefore is out of the reach of all Enemies, and above the power of the gates of hell: Fear not then when you ſee the ſtormes ariſe, and the winds blow againſt this ſpiritual building, for it ſhall ſtand, it is built upon an inviſible, immovable Rock, and

it

great *Babylon*, Rome it ſelf, that under the falſe title, and pretence of ſupporting this building, is working to overthrow it, ſhall be utterly overthrown, and laid equal with the ground, and never be rebuilt again. But this *foundation ſtone* as 'tis commended, by its quality, that 'tis *a living*, and enlivening ſtone, having life, and giving life to thoſe that are built on it. 'Tis further deſcribed by Gods chuſing it, and its own worth, both oppos'd to Mens diſeſteem, and therefore ſaid here: To *be choſen of God*. God did indeed from Eternity contrive this building, and chuſe this ſame foundation, and accordingly in the fulneſs of time, did perform his purpoſe, ſo the thing being one, we may take it, either for his purpoſe, or performance, or both, yet it ſeems moſt ſutable to the ſtrain of the words, and the place after alledged, for laying him in *Sion*, and oppoſing the rejection of Men, that we take it, for Gods actuall employing of Jeſus Chriſt, in the work of our Redemption, he only fit for that work, impoſſible utterly that any other ſhould bear the weight of that ſervice [and ſo of this building] but he who was Almighty. Therefore, the ſpouſe calls him, *the ſelect*, or *choyce of ten thouſand*, yet *rejected of Men*. There is that antipathy (ſo to ſpeak) betwixt the mind of God, and corrupt nature; the things that are highly eſteem'd with men are abomination to God; and thus we ſee here, that which is highly eſteem'd with God, is caſt, and diſallowed by Men. But ſure there is no compariſon, the chuſing, and eſteem of God ſtands, and by that, (judge Men of Chriſt as they will) he is the foundation of this building. And he is in true value anſwerable to

this esteem pretious, which seems to signifie a kind of inward worth, hidden from the eyes of Men, blind unbelieving Men; but well known to God, and to those to whom he reveals him. And this is the very cause of his rejection by the most, the ignorance of his worth, and excellency. As a precious stone that the skilful *Lapidary* esteems much worth, an ignorant beholder makes little or no account of.

These things hold likewise in the other stones of this building, chosen before time, all that should be of this building forecordain'd in Gods purpose, all written in that book before hand, and then, in due time, they are chosen by actual calling according to that purpose; hewed out, and sever'd by Gods own hand, out of the quarry of corrupt nature: Dead stones in themselves, as the rest; but made living, by his bringing them to Christ, and so made *truely precious*, and accounted precious by him that hath made them so. All the stones in this building are called Gods jewels, *Mal.* 3. Though they be vilified, and scoffed and despised by Men. Though they pass for fools, and the refuse of the world, yet they may easily digest all that in the comfort of this, if chosen of God, and precious in his eyes, this is the very Lot of Christ, and therefore by that the more wellcome that it conformes them to him, suites these stones to their foundation.

And if we look right on't what a poor despiseable thing, is the esteem of Men? how soon is it past, it *is a small thing for me*, sayes the *Apostle* to be *judg'd* of men. Now that God often chuses for this building, such stones, as men cast away, as good for nothing, see 1. *Cor.* 1. And where he sayes *Isa.* 51.

51. That he dwells in the high and holy place, What is his other dwelling? his habitation in earth, is it in great palaces and Courts? No. But with him that is of *a contrite and humble ſpirit*. Now theſe are the baſeſt in Mens account, yee he chuſes them, and prefers them to all other palaces, and temples *Iſa. 66. 1. 2.* you cannot gratifie me with any dwelling for I my ſelf have made all, and a ſurer houſe than any you can make me, *the heaven is my throne, and the earth my footſtool*, but I, that am ſo high, am pleaſed to regard the lowly.

3. *To whom coming*] Firſt. *Coming*, then *built up*. They that come unto Chriſt, come not only from the world, that lyeth in wickedneſs, but out of themſelves. Of a great many that ſeem to come to Chriſt, it may be ſaid, that they are not come to him, *becauſe they have not left themſelves*. This is believing on him, which is the very reſigning the ſoul to Chriſt, and living by him. *Ye will not come unto me that ye may have life*, ſayes Chriſt. *Jo. 5. 40.* He complains of it as a wrong done to him: But the loſs is ours, it is his glory to give us life, that were dead: But it is our happineſs to receive that life from him. Now theſe ſtones come unto their foundation, which imports the moving of the ſoul to Chriſt, being moved by his ſpirit, and that the will acts, and willingly, for it cannot act otherwiſe: But as being acted, and drawn by the father. *Joh. 6. No man can come to me Except the father draw him* And the outward means of drawing, is by the word, 'tis the ſound of that harp, that brings the ſtones of this ſpiritual building together, and then being united to Chriſt they are built up. That is as S. *Paul* ex-

preſſes it. *Eph.* 2. 21. *They grow up unto a holy temple in the Lord.*

In times of peace, the Church may dilate more, and build as it were into bredth: But in trouble, it ariſes more in hight, is built upwards, as in cities, where men are ſtraitned, they build uſually higher than in the country. Notwithſtanding of the Churches afflictions yet ſtill the building is going forward, 'tis built (as *Daniel* ſpeaks of *Jeruſalem*) *in troubleous times.* And 'tis this which the Apoſtle intends as ſuiting with his forgoing Exhortation, this may be read exhortatively too, but taking it rather as aſſerting their condition, 'tis for this end, that they may remember to be like it, and grow up. For this end he expreſly calls them living ſtones, an adjunct, not uſual for ſtones, but here inſeparable. And therefore though the Apoſtle changes the ſimilitude from Infants, to ſtones; yet he will not let go, this quality of living, as making chiefly for his purpoſe.

To teach us the neceſſity of growth in Believers, they are therefore much compar'd to things that grow, to Trees planted in fruitful growing places, as by the River of waters; to *Cedars* in *Lebanon* where they are talleſt. To the morning light, to Infants on the breſt, and here where the word ſeems to refuſe it, to *ſtones*, yet (it muſt and well doth admit this unwonted *Epithete*) they are called *living and growing ſtones.*

If then you would have the comfortable perſwaſion of that union with Chriſt, ſee whether you find your ſouls eſtabliſh'd upon Jeſus Chriſt, finding him as your ſtrong foundation, not reſting on your ſelves,

nor

not on any other thing either within you, or without you, but ſupported by him alone, drawing life from him by vertue of that union as from a living foundation, ſo as to ſay, with the Apoſtle, *I live by faith in the Son of God, who both loved me, and given himſelf for me.*

As theſe ſtones are built on Chriſt by faith, ſo they are cemented one to another by love, and therefore, where that is not, 'tis but a deluſion to think themſelves parts of this building. As it is knit to him, 'tis knit together in it ſelf through him, and if dead ſtones in a building ſupport and ſtrengthen mutually one another, how much more ought *living ſtones* in an active lively way to do ſo, the ſtones of this building keep their place, the lower riſe not up to be in the place of the higher, as the Apoſtle ſpeaks, of the parts of the body, ſo the ſtones of this building in humility and love, keep their ſtation, and grow up in it, *ediſying in love Eph.* 4. 16. The Apoſtle importing, that the want of this, much prejudges edification.

Theſe ſtones becauſe living, therefore they grow in the life of grace, and ſpiritualneſs being a Spiritual building, ſo that if we find not this, but our hearts are ſtill carnal, and glued to the earth. *minding earthly things*, wiſer in thoſe, than in Spirituals this evidences ſtrongly againſt us, that we are not of this building. How few of us have that ſpiritualneſs that becomes the Temples of the holy Ghoſt or the ſtones of it, baſe luſts, and thoſe ſtill lodging, and ruling within us, and ſo hearts as Cages of unclean Birds, and filthy ſpirits.

Conſider this as our happineſs, and the unſolidneſs

of

of other comforts, and priviledges, if some have called those stones happy, that were taken for the building of Temples, or altars, beyond those in common houses, how true is it here, happy indeed the stones, that God chuses to be living stones in this Spiritual Temple, though they be hammer'd, and hewed to be polish'd for it, by afflictions and the inward work of mortification, and repentance, 'tis worth the enduring all, to be fitted for this building, happy they, beyond all the rest of men, though they be set in never so great honours, as prime parts of politick buildings, states, and Kingdomes in the Courts of Kings, yea, or Kings themselves: For all other buildings and all the parts of them shall be demolish'd and come to nothing from the foundation, to the cope stone, all your houses both cottages, and palaces *the elements shall melt away*; *and the earth with all the works in it shall be consum'd*, as our Apostle hath it, but this Spiritual building, shall grow up to Heaven, and being come to perfection, shall abide for ever in perfection of beauty, and glory, in it shall be found no unclean thing, nor unclean person: But only they that are written in the Lambs book of Life.

An holy priesthood] As the worship, and Ceremonies of the Jewish Church were all shadows of Jesus Christ, and have their accomplishment in him not only after a singular manner in his owne Person; but in a deriv'd way, in his mystical body, his Church, The Priesthood of the Law represented him, as the great high priest, that offered up himself for our sins, and that is altogether incommunicable; neither is there any peculiar Office of Priesthood for offering

Sacrifice

Sacrifice in the Christian Church, but his alone who is Head of it, but this Dignity, that is here mention'd of a *Spiritual Priesthood*, offering *Spiritual Sacrifice*, is common to all those, that are in Christ as they are living stones built on him into a Spiritual Temple, so they are Priests of that same Temple, made by him, *Revel.* 1. 6. As he was after a transcendent manner, Temple, and Priest, and Sacrifice; so in their kind, are Christians all these three through him; and by his Spirit, that is in them; their Offerings through him are made acceptable.

We have here, 1. The Office. 2. The Service of that Office. 3. The success of that Service.

The death of Jesus Christ, as being every way powerful for reconcilement, and union, did not only break the partition wall of guiltiness that stood betwixt God and Man, but the wall of ceremonies that stood betwixt the Jews, and Gentiles, made all that believe one with God, *and made of both one* as the Apostle speaks, united them one to another, the way of salvation made known, not to one Nation only, but to all people, that whereas the knowledge of God was confin'd to one little corner, 'tis now diffus'd through the Nations, and whereas the dignity of their Priesthood stayed in a few Persons, all they that believe are now thus dignified to be Priests unto God the father, and this was signified by the rending the vail of the Temple at his death, not only that those ceremonies, and sacrifices were to cease, as being all fulfill'd in him: But that the people of God, that were before by that vail held out in the outer Court, were to be admitted into the holy place, as being all of them Priests and fitted to offer sacrifices.

The

The Priesthood of the Law was holy, and its holiness was signified by many outward things sutable to their manner, by *anointings*, and *washings*, and *vestments*; but in this spiritual Priesthood of the Gospel, holiness it self is in stead of all those, as being the substance of all, the Children of God are all anointed, and purified, and cloath'd with holiness. But then.

2. There is here the service of this office namely *to offer*, There is no Priesthood without sacrifice, for these are relative, and this was the chief employment of the legal Priests, now because the Priesthood here spoke of, is altogether Spiritual, therefore the sacrifices must be so too, as the Apostle here expresses it.

We are sav'd the paines, and cost of bringing bullocks, and rams, and other such sacrifices, and these are in their stead; as the Apostle speaks *Heb.* 7. of the high Priesthood of Christ, that *the Priesthood being changed there followed of necessity a change of the Law*, so in this Priesthood of Christians, there is a change of the kind of sacrifice, from the other. All sacrifice is not taken away, but it is chang'd from the offering of those things formerly in use, to Spiritual sacrifices.

Now these are every way preferable, they are easier, and cheaper to us, and yet more precious, and acceptable to God. As here followes in the text, even in the time when the other sacrifices were in request, yet those Spiritual offerings, had ever the precedence in Gods account, and without them, he hated, and despis'd all burnt offerings, and the largest sacrifices, though they were then conforme to his own

own appointment; how much more should we abound in Spiritual Sacrifice, that are eas'd of the other? How much more holds that answer now, that was given even in those times, *Mic.* 6. 6. *wherewith shall I come before the Lord*, &c. you need not all that trouble and expense, it is at hand that God requires most of all, Namely, *to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God.* So *Psal.* 50. 23. That which is peculiarly spoke of Christ holds in Christians by conformity with him.

But though the Spiritual sacrificing is easier in its own nature, yet to the corrupt nature of Man 'tis by far the harder. He would rather chuse still all the toyl, and cost of the former way, if it were in his option; this was the sin of the Jews, in those times, that they lean'd the soul upon the bodies service too much, and would have done enough of that to be dispenst from this Spiritual service. Hence are the Lords frequent reproofs and complaints in this, *Psal.* 50. *Isai.* 1 &c. Hence the willingness in Popery for outward work, for Penances, and satisfactions of Bodies, and Purses, any thing of that kind, if it might serve, rather than the inward work of Repentance, and Mortification, the Spiritual Service, and sacrifices of the Soul, but the answer of all those from God is that of the Prophet *who required these things at your hands.*

Indeed the works of Charity they press, if they be done with a right hand, and the left hand not so much as acquainted with the business, as our Saviour speaks, *Let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doth.* They must be done with a right, and singular intention, and from a right Principle mov-

ing to them, without any vain opinon of Meriting by them with God, or any vain desire of gaining applause with Men; but merely, out of Love to God, and to Man for his sake, thus they are one of these Spiritual Sacrifices. And therefore ought by no means to be neglected by Christian Priests, that is by any that are Christians.

Another Spiritual Sacrifice is, The Prayers of the Saints, *Revel.* 5. 8. *Psal.* 141. 2. *Let my Prayer be set forth before thee as Incense, and the lifting up of my hands as an Evening Sacrifice.* 'Tis not the composure of Prayer, or the eloquence of expression that is the sweetness of it in Gods account, and makes it a Sacrifice of a pleasing smell or sweet odour to him: But the breathing forth the desire of the heart, that's it, that makes it a Spiritual Sacrifice, otherwise 'tis as carnal, and dead, and worthless in Gods account, as the carcases of Beasts. Incense can neither smell, nor ascend without fire, no more doth Prayer unless it arise from a bent of Spiritual affection, 'tis that both makes it smell, and sends it Heavenwards, makes it never leave moving upwards till it come before God, and smell sweet in His Nostrils, which few, too few of our Prayers do.

Praise also is a *Sacrifice*, to make respectful and honourable mention of the Name of God, and of his goodness, to bless him humbly and heartily, *Heb.* 13. 15. *Psal.* 50. 14. 23. *Offer unto God thanksgiving Whoso offereth praise glorifyeth me.* And this is that Sacrifice that shall never end, but continues in Heaven to Eternity. Then a *holy course of life* is called *the Sacrifice of Righteousness*, *Psal.* 4. 6. *Phil.* 4. 18. *Heb.* 13. 16. Where he shews what Sacrifices succeed

ceed to those, that thus he hath taught, so much are abolish'd. Christ Sacrific'd for us, and that only powerful to take away sin; but our gratulatory Sacrifices, Praise and Alms are as Incense burnt to God, of which as the standers by find the sweet smell so the holy life of a Christian, smell sweet to those with whom they live, but the wicked as putrified Carcasses are of a noysom smell to God, and Man. *Psal.* 14. 4. *They are Corrupt they have done abominable works.*

In a word, that our Sacrifice, that includes all these, and without which, none of these, can be rightly offered, is *Our selves*, our whole selves, our *Bodies a living Sacrifice*, *Rom.* 12. 1. and they are not that, without our Souls, 'tis our heart given, that gives all the rest, for that commands all. *My Son give me thy heart*, and then the other will follow. *Thine eyes will delight in my wayes*, this makes the Eyes, and Ears, and Tongue, and Hands, and all to be holy, as Gods peculiar, being once given, and consecrate to him, and therefore sacriledge to turn them to any unholy use. This makes a Man delight to hear, and speak of things that concern God, and to think on him frequently, to be holy in his secret thoughts, and all his wayes, in every thing we bring him, every Thanksgiving and Prayer we offer, his eye is upon the heart, he lookes if it be in together with our offering, and if he miss it, cares not for all the rest; but throwes it back again.

The heart must be offered withal and the whole heart, all of it entirely given to him: *se totum obtulit Christus pro nobis.* In another sense, which crosses not this, it must not be *whole* but *broken.*

Psal. 51. But if thou find it unbroken, yet give it him, with a desire that it may be broken; and if it be broken, and when thou hast given it him, he break it more, yea and melt it too, yet thou shalt not repent thy gift, for he breaks, and melts it, that he may refine it, and make it up in a new and excellent frame, and may impresse his own Image on it, make it holy, and so like to himself.

Let us then give him our selves, or nothing, and to give our selves to him, is not his advantage but ours, as the *Philosopher* said to his poor Scholar, that when others gave him great gifts told him, *he had nothing but himself to give.* 'Tis well said he, *and I will endeavour to give thee back to thy self, better than I received thee.* Thus doth God with us, and a Christian makes himself his daily Sacrifice, he renews this gift of himself every day to God, and receiving it every day better'd again, still he hath the more light to give it, as being fitter for God, the more 'tis sanctified by former Sacrificing.

Now that, whereby we offer all other Spiritual Sacrifices, and our selves withal, is Love, that is the holy fire that burns up all, sends up our Prayers, and our hearts, and our whole selves a whole burnt offering to God, and as the fire of the Altar, it is originally from Heaven, being kindled by Gods own love to us, and by this the Church and each Believer ascends like a *straight Pillar of smoak*, as the word is, *Cant.* 3. 6. going even up to God perfum'd with Aloes, and all the Spices, all the graces of the Spirit, receiv'd from Christ, but above all with his own Merits.

How far from this is the common Multitude of us though

though professing to be Christians? Who considers his holy calling: As the peculiar holiness of the Ministry should be much in their Eye and thoughts that are call'd to't, to study to be answerably eminent in holiness, so all that are Christians consider you are Priests unto God, being called a *Holy Priesthood*; thus you ought to be, but if we speak what we are indeed, we must say rather we are an unholy Priesthood, a shame to that Name and holy Profession, in stead of the Sacrifices of a godly Life, and the incense of Prayer, and Praise in Families, and alone, what is with many, but the filthy vapours of prophane speaking, and a profane life, as a noysome smell arising out of a dunghil.

But you that have once offered up your selves unto God, and are still doing so, with all the services you can reach, Continue so, and be assur'd, that how unworthy soever your selves, and all your offerings be, yet they shall not be rejected.

The 3. thing here observable is the success of that Service, *acceptable to God by Jesus Christ. Heb.* 13. 16. The Children of God do delight in offering Sacrifices to him: but if they might not know that they were well taken at their hands, this would discourage them much; therefore this is added; how often do the Godly find it in their sweet experience? That when they come to Pray, he welcomes them, and gives them such evidences of his love, as they would not exchange for all Worldly pleasures, and when this doth not so presently appear at other times, yet they ought to believe it, he accepts themselves and their wayes offer'd in sincerity, though never so mean, though they some-

times

times have no more, but a ſigh or groan, is moſt properly a Spiritual Sacrifice.

Stay not away becauſe thou, and thy gifts thou offer'ſt, are below others, no, none are excluded for that, only give what thou haſt, and act with affection, for that he regards moſt; Under the Law they that had not a Lamb, were welcome with a pair of Pigeons, ſo that the Chriſtian may ſay, *What I am Lord, I offer my ſelf unto thee, to be wholly thine, and had I a thouſand times more of outward, or inward gifts, all ſhould be thine, had I more Eſtate, or Wit, or Learning, or Power, I would endeavour to ſerve thee with all. What I have I offer thee, and it is moſt truly thine, it is but of thy own that I give thee.* None needs forbear Sacrifice for Poverty, for that he deſires is the heart, and there is none ſo poor but hath a heart to give him.

But meanneſs is not all, there is a guiltineſs on our ſelves, and on all we offer, our Prayers and Services are all polluted; But this hinders not neither; for our acceptance, is not for our ſelves; but for one, who hath no guiltineſs at all. *Acceptable by Jeſus Chriſt.* In him our Perſons are cloath'd with righteouſneſs, and in his cloathing, we are as *Iſaac* ſaid of *Jacob* in his Brother's garments, *as the ſmell of a Field that the Lord hath bleſſed.* And all our other Sacrifices, our Prayers, and Services if we offer them by him, and put them into his hand to offer to the Father, then doubt not they will be accepted in him, for this *by Jeſus Chriſt*, is relative both to our Offering and acceptance, we ought not to offer any thing, but by him. *Heb.* 13. 15. And ſo we are well pleaſing, for he is his wellbeloved

Son

God, in whom his soul is delighted, not only delighted, and pleas'd with himself, but *in him*, with all things and Persons that appear in him, and are presented by him.

And this alone answers all our doubts, for we our selves, for as little as we see that way, yet may see so much in our best services, so many wandrings in Prayer, so much deadness, &c. as would make us still doubtful of acceptance, and might say with *Job, although he had answered me, yet would I not believe that he had hearkned to me*, were it not this, that our Prayers, and all our Sacrifices pass through Christs hand, he is that Angel that hath much sweet odours, to mingle with the Prayers of the Saints, he purifies them with his own Merits, and Intercession, and so makes them pleasing unto the Father. How ought our hearts to be knit to him? by whom we are brought into favour with God, and kept in favour with him, in whom we obtain all the good we receive, and in whom all we offer is accepted. In him are all our supplies of grace, and our hopes of glory.

Verse 6.

Wherefore also it is contained in the Scripture, behold I lay in Sion a chief Corner stone, elect, precious: and he that believeth on him, shall not be confounded.

THat which is the chief of the works of God, is therefore very reasonably the chief Subject of his

his word, as both most excellent in it self, and of most concernment for us to know.

And this is the saving of lost Mankind by his Son. therefore is his name as precious Ointment or perfume diffus'd through the whole Scriptures, all these holy leaves smell of it, not only those that were written after his coming, but those before. *Search the Scriptures*, sayes he himself, *for they testify of me.* Namely, the Scriptures of the Old Testament which were only then written, and to evidence this, both himself, and his Apostles make so frequent use of their testimony, and we find so much of them inserted into the New, as being both one in substance, their lines meeting in the same Jesus Christ as their center.

The Apostle here, having expres'd the happy Estate and Dignity of Christians under a double notion, 1. Of a Spiritual House or Temple. 2. Of a Spiritual Priesthood, he amplifies and confirmes both from the Writings of the Prophets. The former *Verse* 6, 7, 8. The latter *Verse* 9. Those places that he cites, touching this building are most pertinent, for they have clearly in them, all that he spoke of it, both concerning the foundation, and the Edifice, as the first in these words of *Esay* 28. 16. *Behold I lay in Sion a chief Corner stone*, &c.

Let this commend the Scriptures much to our diligence, and affection, that their great Theme is our Redeemer, and Redemption wrought by him, that they contain the Doctrine of his excellencies, are the lively picture of his matchless beauty; were we more in them, we would daily see more of him in them and so of necessity love him more, but we

we muſt look within them, the Letter is but the caſe; the Spiritual ſenſe is that we ſhould deſire to ſee: We uſualy huddle them over, and ſee no further than their outſide, and therefore, find ſo little ſweetneſs in them, we read them, but we ſearch them not, as he requires. Would we digg into thoſe Golden Mines, we would find treaſures of comfort that cannot be ſpent, but would furniſh us in the hardeſt times.

The prophecy here cited, if we look upon it in its own place, we ſhall find it caſt in, in the middle of a very ſad denounciation of judgement againſt the Jewes. And this is uſual with the Prophets, particularly with this Evangelicall Prophet *Eſay*, to uphold the ſpirits of the godly, in the worſt times, with this one great conſolation, the promiſe of the Meſſiah; as weighing down all, both temporal diſtreſſes, and deliverances. Hence are thoſe ſudden aſcents (ſo frequent in the Prophets) from their preſent ſubject to this great hope of Iſrael. And if this expectation of a Saviour was ſo pertinent a comfort in all eſtates, ſo many ages before the accompliſhment of it, how wrongfully do we undervalue it being accompliſh'd, that cannot live upon it, and anſwer all with it, ſweeten all our griefs in this advantage, that there is a foundation ſtone laid in *Sion*, on which they that are builded ſhall be ſure not to be aſhamed.

In the words there are 4 things. 1. This foundation ſtone. 2. The laying of it. 3. The building on it. 4. The greatneſs and Excellency of the work.

1. For the foundation called here a *Cheif corner ſtone*, Though the Prophet's words are not preciſely

render'd, yet the ſubſtance, and ſenſe is one: There, both the foundation and corner ſtone is expreſſ'd, the corner ſtone in the foundation being the main ſupport of the building, and throughout the corner ſtones uniting and knitting the building together; and therefore this ſame word of *a corner*, is frequently taken in Scripture for *Princes*, or Heads of people: *Jud.* 20. 2. 1 *Sam.*14. 38. becauſe good governours, and government are that, which upholds, and unites the ſocieties of people in ſtates or kingdomes, as one building. And Jeſus Chirſt is indeed the alone head, and King of his Church, that gives it lawes, and rules it in wiſdom, and righteonſneſs, the alone rock on which his Church is built, not *Peter*, if we will believe S. *Peter* himſelf, as here he teaches us, much leſs his pretended Succeſſors; he is the foundation, and corner ſtone that knitts together the walls of Jews and Gentiles, *having made of both one*, as S. *Paul* ſpeaks, and unites the whole number of believers into one everlaſting temple, and bears the weight of the whole fabrick.

Elected] or choſen out for the purpoſe, and altogether fit for it, *Iſaiah* hath it, a *ſtone of triall*, or *a tryed ſtone*: As things amongſt Men are beſt choſen, after trial, ſo Jeſus Chriſt certainly known by the father, as moſt fit for that work, to which he choſe him before he try'd him, as after upon tryal in his Life, and death, and reſurrection he prov'd fully anſwerable to his fathers purpoſe, in all that was appointed him.

All the ſtrength of Angels combin'd had not ſuffic'd for that buſineſs, but the wiſe architect of this building, knew both what it would coſt, and what a foun-

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dation was needful to bear so great, and so lasting a structure as he intended. Sin having defac'd, and demolish'd, the first building of Man in th' integrity of his creation, it was Gods design out of the very ruines of fallen Man to raise a more lasting edifice, than the former one, that should not be subject to decay, and therefore fitted a foundation, that might be everlasting: The sure founding is the main, therefore that it might stand for the true honour of his Majesty (which *Nebuchadnezzar* vainly boasted of his *Babel*) he chose his own son, made flesh; he was God that he might be a strong foundation, he was Man that he might be suitable to the nature of the stones whereof the building was to consist, that they might joyn and cement together.

Precious] Inestimably precious, by all the conditions that can give worth to any, by rareness, and by inward excellency, and useful vertues. Rare he is out of doubt, there is not such a person in the world again. Therefore called by the same Prophet, *wonderful*, full of wonders, the power of God, and the frailty of Man dwelling together in his person the *ancient of dayes*, becoming an Infant: He that *stretch'd forth the Heavens*, bound up in swadling cloaths in that his Infancy; and in his full age, stretch'd forth on the crosse; altogether *spotless*, and *innocent*, and yet suffering, not only the unjust cruelties of Men; but the just wrath of God his Father; *the Lord of life*, and yet dying. His excellency appears in the same things, In that he is the Lord of life, God blessed for ever, equal with the father; the sparkling brightness of this precious stone is no less, than this, that he is *the brightness of the fathers*

glory; so bright, that Men could not have beheld him appearing in himself, therefore he vailed it with our flesh, and yet through that, it shined, and sparkled so, that the Apostle S. *John* sayes of himself, and those others that had eyes opened, and look'd right upon him, *he dwelt amongst us, and he* had a tent like ours, and yet through that, *wee saw his glory, as the glory of the only begotten son of God, full of grace and truth.* The Deity filling his humane nature with all manner of grace, in its highest perfection. And not only thus Excellent in himself; but of precious vertue, which he lets forth, and imparts to others, of such vertue, that a touch of him is the only cure of Spiritual diseases: Men tell of strange vertues of some stones, but it is certain, that this precious stone, hath not only vertue to heal the Sick, but even to raise the dead. Dead bodies he raised in the dayes of his abode on earth, and dead Souls he still doth raise by the power of his word. The Prophet *Malachy* calls him, *the sun of righteousness*, which hath in it the rarenes, and excellency we speak; of he is singular, as there is but one Sun in the world, so but one Saviour, and his lustre such a stone, as outshines the Sun in its fullest brightnes; and then for his usefull vertue, he addes, that *he hath healing under his wings*, this his worth is unspeakable, and remains infinitely beyond all these resemblances.

2 There is here the laying of this foundation, and its said to be laid in *Sion*, that is, it is laid in the Church of God, and first laid in *Sion* literaly, being then the seat of the Church and true Religion, he was laid there, in his manifestation in the flesh, and suffering, and dying, and rising again, and afterwards being

being preached through the world, became the foundation of his Church in all places where his name was receiv'd, and so was a stone growing great till it *fill'd the whole earth*, as *Daniel* hath it.

He saith, I *lay*, by which the Lord expresseth this his own proper work, as the *Psalmist* speaks of the same subject. *Psa.* 118. *This is the Lords doing, and it is marvelous in our eyes.* So *Isa.* 9. 7. Speaking of this promis'd Messiah, *the zeal of the Lord of Hosts will perform this.*

And this is not only said *I lay* because he had the first thought of this great work, the model of it was in his mind from eternity, and that the accomplishment of it was by his Almighty power in the morning of his Sons birth, and his Life, and death, and Resurrection, but to signify withal the freeness of his grace, in giving his Son, to be a foundation of happiness to Man, without the least motion from Man, or motive in Man, to draw him to't; and this seems to be signified by the unexpected inserting of these prophetical promises of the Messiah, in the midst of complaints of people's wickedness, and theatning them with punishment, intimating that there is no connexion betwixt this work and any thing on Mans part, fit to procure it; although you doe thus provoke me to destroy you, yet of my self I have other thoughts, there's another purpose in my head. And *Isa.* 7. 'tis observable to this purpose, that, that cleerest promise of the virgin's son, is given, not only unrequir'd, but being refus'd by that profane King.

This again, that the Lord himself is the layer of this corner stone, teaches us, the firmness of it, which

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is likewiſe expreſs'd in the Prophets words very emphatically by redoubling the ſame word, *Muſad, Muſad*; *fundamentum, fundamentum.*

So *Pſal.* 2. 6. *I have ſet my King upon my holy hill of Sion*, who then ſhall dethrone him? *I have given him the Heathen for his Inheritance, and the ends of the earth for his poſſeſſion*, and who will hinder him to take poſſeſſion of his right? if any offer to do ſo, what ſhall they be, but a number of earthen veſſels, fighting againſt an Iron Scepter, and ſo certainly breaking themſelves in pieces. Thus here, *I lay this foundation ſtone*, and if I lay it, who ſhall remove it? and what I build upon it, who ſhall be able to caſt down? For it is the glory of this great Maſter-builder, that the whole Fabrick, that is of his building, be unruinable, and for that end hath he laid an unmovable foundation, and for that end are we taught and remembred of its firmneſs, that we may have this confidence concerning the Church of God, that is built upon it. To the Eye of Nature the Church ſeems to have no foundation, as *Job* ſpeaks of the earth, *that it is hung upon nothing*, and yet as the Earth remaineth firm being eſtabliſh'd in its place by the word and power of God, the Church is moſt firmly founded upon the word made fleſh, Jeſus Chriſt, as its chief Corner ſtone, and as all the winds that blow cannot remove the earth out of its place, neither can all the attempts of Men, no nor of *the gates of hell* prevail againſt the Church, it may be beat with very boyſterous ſtorms; but it cannot fall, becauſe founded upon this Rock. Thus it is with the whole houſe, and thus with every ſtone in it, as here it followes *he that believeth ſhall not be confounded*

3.

3. There is next the building on this foundation This is plainly to be built on Christ, to believe in him: But in this, the most deceive themselves, they hear of such privileges, and happiness in Christ, and presently imagine, 'tis all theirs, without any more ado, as that Mad man of *Athens*, that wrote up all the ships came into the haven for his own: We consider not, what this is to believe in him, and what is the necessity of this believing, that we may be partakers of the salvation that he hath wrought. 'Tis not they that have heard of him, or that have some common knowledge of him, or are able to discourse of him, and speak of his Person, and nature aright: But *they that believe in him.* Much of our knowledge, is, as the poor Philosopher, (or as a *Geometer* that can measure Land exactly in all its dimensions, but possesseth not a foot.) who defineth riches exactly, and discourseth of their nature, but possesseth none; and truely 'tis but a lifeless unsavoury knowledge men have of Christ, by all books and study, till he Reveal himself, and perswade the heart to *believe in him.* Then indeed it sayes of all the reports it heard, when it sees him, and is made one with him, I heard much, yet *the half was not told me.* There is in lively faith, when it is infus'd into the soul, a clearer knowledge of Christ, and his excellency than before, and withall a recumbence, of the soul upon him as the foundation of its life, and comfort; a resolving to rest on him, and not to depart from him, upon any termes. Though I be beset on all hands, be accus'd by the law, and mine own conscience, and by Satan, and have nothing to answer for my self, yet here I will stay, for I am sure, in him there is salvation, and no where

else.

else. All other refuges, are but lies, as its in the words before these in the Prophet, poor base shifts, that will do no good, and God hath laid this Precious stone in *Sion*, for this very purpose, that weary souls may rest upon it, and why should not I make use of it according to his intention, he hath not forbid any how wretched soever to believe, but commands it, and himself works it where he will, even in the vilest sinners.

Think it not enough that you know this Stone is laid, but see whether you are built on it by faith: The multitude of imaginary believers ly round about it, but they are never the better nor the surer for that, no more than stones that ly loose in heaps near unto a foundation, but are not joyned to't, there is no benefit to us by Christ, without union with him. No comfort in his riches, without interest in them, and title to them, by that union, then is the soul right, when it can say, *He is altogether lovely*, and as the spouse there, *He is mine, my welbeloved*. And this union is the spring of all Spiritual consolations, and faith, by which we are thus united, is a divine work; he that laid this foundation in *Sion* with his own hand, works likewise with the same hand faith in the heart, by which it is knit to this corner stone, 'its not so easy a thing as we imagine to believe, *Eph.* 1. 19. Many that think they believe are amongst the others quite contrary, that the Prophet there speaks, of *hardened in sin*, and carnally secure, which he calls to be in covenant with hell, and death, walking in sin, and yet promising themselves impunity.

4. There is the firmness of this building, *Namely*, *He that believeth on him shall not be Confounded*.]

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This firmness is answerable to the nature of the foundation. Not only the whole frame, but every stone of it, abideth sure. 'Tis a simple mistake, to judge the perswasion of perseverance to be self-presumption, they that have it are far from building it on themselves, but their foundation is that which makes them sure, because it doth not only remain firm it self, but indissolubly supports all that are once built on it. In the Prophet, whence this is cited, 'tis, *shall not make haste*, but the sense is one, they that are disappointed, and ashamed in their hopes, run to and fro, and seek after some new recourse; This they shall not need to do, that come to Christ. The believing soul makes haste to Christ, but it never finds cause to hasten from him, and though the comfort it expects and longs for, be for a time deferr'd, yet it gives not over, knowing that in due time, it shall rejoyce; and shall not have cause to blush, and think shame of its confidence in him. *David* expresseth this distrust, by *making haste*. *Psal.* 31. 22. and 116. 11. *I was too hasty, when I said so.* Hopes frustrated, especially where they have been rais'd high, and continued long, do reproach Men with folly, and so shame them. And thus do all earthly hopes serve us, when we lean much upon them. We find these things usually, that have promis'd us most content, pay us with vexation, not only prove broken reeds, deceiving our trust, but hurtful, running their broken splinters into our hand, that lean'd on them. This sure Foundation is laid for us, that our souls may be establish'd on it, and be as *Mount Sion* that cannot be removed. Such times may come, as will shake all other supports, but this

holds out against all, *Psal.* 46. 2. *Though the earth be removed yet will not we fear.* Though the frame of the World were cracking about a Mans ears, he may hear it unaffrighted, that is built on this Foundation. Why then do we chuse to build upon the sand? Believe it, whereſoever we lay our confidence, and affection beſides Chriſt, it ſhall once repent us, and aſhame us, either happily in time, while we may change them for him, and have recourſe to him, or miſerably, when 'tis too late: Remember that we muſt die, and muſt appear before the Judgment Seat of God, and that the things we dote on here, have neither Power to ſtay us here, nor have we power to take them along with us, nor if we could, would they at all profit us there; and therefore when we look back upon them all at parting, we ſhall wonder what fools we were, to make ſo poor a Choyce, and then in that great day wherein *all faces ſhall gather blackneſs*, and be fill'd with confuſion, that have neglected to make Chriſt their ſtay when he was offer'd them: then it ſhall appear, how happy they are that have truſted in him, *they ſhall not be confounded*, but ſhall lift up their faces and be acquitted in him. In their preſent eſtate they may be founded, and exercis'd, but *they ſhall'n ot be confounded*, nor aſhamed; a double negation in the Original, *by no means*, they ſhall in all *be more than Conquerours through him that hath loved them.*

Behold.] The laſt thing Obſ. is in that firſt word importing this work to be great, and remarkable, and calling the eyes to behold it.

The Lord is marvellous in the leaſt of his works, but in this he hath manifeſted more of his wiſdom,

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and power, and let out more of his love to Mankind, than in all the rest, but we are foolish, and childishly gaze about us upon trifles, and let this great work pass unregarded, scarce afford it half an Eye. Turn your wandring Eyes this way; Look upon this precious Stone, and behold him, not in mere speculation, but so behold him, as to lay hold on him: For we see he is therefore here set forth, that we may *believe on him, and so not be confounded*, that we may attain this blessed union, that cannot be dissolv'd, all other unions are dissoluble: A Man may be pluckt from his dwelling House and Lands, or they from him, though he have never so good title to them, may be removed from his dearest friends, the Husband from the Wife, if not by other accidents in their lifetime, yet sure by death, the great dissolver of all those unions, and of that straitest of the Soul with the Body; but it can do nothing against this union but perfects it, for *I am perswaded* (sayes St. *Paul*) *that neither death nor life, nor Angels, nor Principalities, nor Powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height nor depth, nor any other creature shall be able to seperate us from the Love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

There is a twofold mistake concerning faith, 1*st*. They that are altogether void of it, abusing and flattering themselves in a vain opinion that they have it; and on the other side, they that have it, misjudging their own Condition, and so prejudging themselves of much comfort, and sweetness that they might find in their believing, the former is the worse, and yet the far com-

moner evil, and as one sayes of Wisdom, 'tis true of Faith, *Many would seek after it, and attain it, if they did not falsly imagine that they have attained it already.* There is nothing more contrary to the lively nature of Faith, than for the soul not to be at all busied with the thoughts of its own Spiritual condition, and yet this very character of unbelief passes with a great many for believing; they doubt not, that is indeed they consider not what they are, their minds are not all in these things, are not awak'd to seek diligently after Jesus, and not to rest till they find him, they're well enough without him, it suffices them they hear there is such a one, but they ask not themselves, is he mine, or no? But sure if that be all, not to doubt, the Bruites believe as well. It were better out of all question to be labouring under doubtings; if it be a more hopeful condition, to find a Man groaning and complaining, than speechless, and breathless, and not stirring at all.

There be in Spiritual doubtings two things, their is a sollicitous care of the Soul concerning its own estate, and diligent inquiry into it; and that is laudable, being a true work of the spirit of God, but the other thing in them, perplexity and distrust that arises from darkness and weakness in the soul; as where there is a great deal of smoak, and no clear flame, it argues much moysture in the matter, yet it witnesseth certainly that there is fire there; and therefore dubious questioning of a Man concerning himself, is a much better evidence, than that senseless deadness that most take for believing. Men that that know nothing in sciences have no doubts, he never truly believ'd that was not made first sensible

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and convinc'd of unbelief. This is the Spirits first errand in the World to *convince it of sin*, and the Sin is this, that *they believe not*. If the Faith that thou hast grew out of thy natural heart of it self, 'tis but a Weed be sure, the right plant of Faith is always set by Gods own hand, and 'tis watered and preserv'd by him, because expos'd to many hazzards, he watches it Night and Day. *Isa.* 27. 3. *I the Lord do keep it, I will water it every moment, lest any hurt it, I will keep it night and day.*

Again how impudent is it in the most, to pretend believing, while they wallow in Prophaness, if Faith unite the soul unto Christ, certainly it puts it into participation of his Spirit, *for if any Man have not the spirit of Christ, he is none of his*, sayes St. *Paul*. This faith in Christ bring us into Communion with God. Now *God is light*, sayes St. *John*, and therefore inferrs, *if we say we have fellowship with God, and walk in darkness, we lie and do not the truth.* The lie appears in our practise, an unsuitableness in our carriage, as he said of him that sign'd his *verse* wrong, *fecit solœcismum manu.*

But there be imaginary Believers, that are a little more refin'd, that live after a blameless, yea, and a Religious manner, for there outward, and yet are but appearances of Christians, have not the living work of Faith within, and all these exercises are dead works in their hands. Amongst these some may have such motions within themselves, as may deceive themselves, as well as their outward deportment deceives others; some transient touches of desire to Christ, upon the unfolding of his excellencies in the Preaching of the word, and upon some conviction

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of their own neceſſity, and conceive ſome joy upon thoughts of apprehending him, and yet all this proves but an evaniſhing fancy, an embracing of a ſhaddow. And becauſe Men that are thus deluded meet not with Chriſt indeed, do not really find his ſweetneſs, therefore within a while, they return to the pleaſure of ſin, and their latter end proves worſe than their beginning; their hearts could not poſſibly be ſtedfaſt, becauſe there was nothing to fix them on, in all that work wherein Chriſt himſelf was wanting.

But the truly believing Soul, that is brought unto Jeſus Chriſt, and faſtened upon him by Gods own hand, abides ſtay'd on him, and departs not. And in theſe the very belief of the things that are ſpoken concerning Chriſt in the Goſpel, the perſwaſion of Divine truth, is of a higher nature than the common conſent that they call Hiſtorical, another knowledge and evidence of the myſteries of the Kingdom than natural Men can have; this is indeed the ground of all, the very thing that cauſes a Man reſt upon Chriſt, when he hath a perſwaſion wrought in his heart by the Spirit of God, that Chriſt is an able Redeemer, a ſufficient Saviour, *able to ſave all that come to him.* Then upon this, the heart reſolves upon that courſe, ſeeing I am perſwaded of this, that *whoſo believes in him ſhall not periſh, but have everlaſting life,* as here it is, *ſhall not be confounded,* I am to deliberate no longer, this is the the thing I muſt doe, to lay my ſoul upon him, upon one that is an Almighty Redeemer. And it does ſo. Now theſe firſt actings of Faith have in themſelves an evidence, that diſtinguiſhes them from all that's counterfeit, a light

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of their own, by which the ſoul wherein they are, may diſcern them, and ſay this is the right work of Faith, eſpecially, when God ſhines upon the Soul, and clears it in the diſcovery of his own work within it.

And further, they may find the influence of Faith upon the affections, purifying them; as our Apoſtle ſayes of it, *Act.* 15. 9. Faith knits the heart to a holy Head, a pure Lord, the ſpring of purity, and therefore cannot chuſe, but make it pure, it is a beam from heaven that raiſes the mind to a Heavenly temper. Although there remaines of ſin in a believing ſoul, yet 'tis a hated wearyſome gueſt there, 'tis not there, as its delight, but as its greateſt grief, and malady, that it is ſtill lamenting and complaining of, and had rather be rid of, than gain a World. Thus 'tis purified from affecting ſin.

So then where theſe are, a Spiritual apprehenſion of the Promiſes, and a cleaving of the Soul unto Chriſt, and ſuch a delight in him, as makes ſin vile, and diſtaſtful, that the heart is ſet againſt it, and as the Needle touch'd with the Loadſtone, is ſtill turn'd towards Chriſt, and lookes at him in all eſtates. The Soul that is thus diſpos'd, hath certainly Intereſt in him, and therefore ought not to affect an humour of doubting, but to conclude that how unworthy ſoever in it ſelf, yet being in him, it ſhall not be aſhamed, not only it ſhall never have cauſe to think ſhame of him, but all its juſt cauſe of ſhame in it ſelf, ſhall be taken away, it ſhall be cover'd with his Righteouſneſs, and appear ſo before the Father. Who muſt not think, if my ſins were to be ſet in order, and appear againſt me, how would

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my face be fill'd with ſhame? Though there were no more, if ſome thoughts that I am guilty of were laid to my charge, I were utterly ſham'd and undone. Oh! Nothing in my ſelf but matter of ſhame, but yet in Chriſt more matter of glorying, who endured ſhame, that we might not be aſhamed. We cannot diſtruſt our ſelves enough, nor truſt enough in him. Let it be right Faith, and there is no excels in believing. Though I have ſinn'd againſt him, and abus'd his goodneſs, yet I will not leave him, for whether ſhould I go, he and none but he, *hath the words of Eternal life;* yea, though he being ſo often offended, ſhould threaten to leave me to the ſhame of my own follies, yet I will ſtay by him, and wait for a better anſwer, and I know I ſhall obtain it, this is aſſur'd me for my comfort, that *whoſoever believes in him ſhall not be aſhamed.*

Verſe 7.

Unto you therefore which believe he is precious, but unto them who be diſobedient, the ſtone which the Builders diſallowed, the ſame is made the head of the Corner.

BEſides all the oppoſition that meets Faith within, in our hearts, it hath this without, that it rowes againſt the great ſtream of the Worlds opinion. And therefore hath need, eſpecially where it is very tender, and weak, to be ſtrengthened againſt that.

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The multitude of unbelievers, and the considerable quality of many of them in the world, is one continuing cause of that very multitude: And the fewness of them that truely believe, doth much to the keeping of them still few; and as this prejudice prevails with them, that believe not, so it may sometimes assault the mind of a believer, when he thinks how many, and many of them wise men in the world, reject Christ, Whence can this be? Particularly the believing Jews, to whom this Epistle is address'd, might think it strange, that not only the Gentiles that were strangers to true Religion, but their own Nation, that was the select people of God, and had the light of his Oracles kept in amongst them only; that yet so many of them, yea, and the chief of them, should be despisers, and haters of Jesus Christ. And that these that were best vers'd in the Law, and so seem'd best able to judge of the Messiah foretold, should have persecuted Christ all his life, and at last put him to a shameful death.

That they may know, this makes nothing against him, nor ought to invalide their faith at all, but rather indeed testifies with Christ, and so serves to confirm them in believing, the Apostle make use of those Propherical Scriptures, that foretell the unbelief, and contempt the most would entertain Christ withal, as old *Simeon* speaks of him, when he was come, conform to these former predictions: That he should be a *sign of contradiction*, as he was the promis'd sign of salvation to believers, so he should be a very mark of enmities, and contradictions to the unbelieving world; the places the Apostle here useth, suite with his present discourse, and the words cited

from *Esay* in the former *Verse* continuing the resemblance of *a corner stone*, they are partly from *Psa.* 118. partly out of 8th. of *Esay*.

Unto you, &c.] Wonder not that others refuse him; but believe the more for that, because, you see the word to be true even in their not believing of it, it is fulfill'd and verified by their very rejecting it as false.

And whatsoever are the worlds thoughts, concerning Christ, that imports not: For they know him not, but you that do indeed believe, I dare appeal to your selves, your own faith, that you have of him, whether he is not precious to you, if you do not really find him fully answerable to all that is spoken of him in the word, and that accordingly, you have believ'd concerning him.

We are here 1. To Consider the opposition of the persons. And then 2. Of the things spoken of them. 1. They are oppos'd under the name of believers, and disobedient, or unbelievers; for the word is so neer that it may be taken for unbelief, as is by some so rendered. And the things are large as near, as the words that signify them; *disobedience*, and *unbelief*. 1. Unbelief is it self the grand disobedience, for this is the work of God, that which the Gospel mainely commands, *Joh. 6. 29. that ye believe*: Therefore the Apostle calls it *the obedience of faith*. *Rom.* 1. 5. And there is nothing indeed more worthy the name of obedience, than the subjection of the mind to receive, and believe those supernatural truths, that the Gospel teaches concerning Jesus Christ. To obey, so as to have, as the Apostle speaks, the *impression* of that divine pat-

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tern ſtamp'd upon the heart, to have the heart delivered up, as the word there is, and laid under it, to receive it, *Rom.* 6. 17. The word here us'd for diſobedience, ſignifies properly *unperſuaſion*, and there is nothing can more properly expreſs the nature of unbelief than that, and it is the very nature of our corrupt hearts: We are *Children of diſobedience* or *unperſuaſibleneſs*, altogether incredulous towards God, who is truth it ſelf, and as pliable wax in Satan's hand, he works in them what he will, as there the Apoſtle expreſſes, moſt eaſie of belief to him, that is *the very father of lies*, as our Saviour calls him, a *Liar and a murderer from the beginning*, murdering by lies, as he did in the beginning.

2. Unbelief is radically all other diſobedience: For all flowes from unbelief. This we leaſt of all ſuſpect; but 'tis the bitter Root of all that ungodlineſs that abounds amongſt us. A right, and lively perſuaſion of the heart concerning Jeſus Chriſt alters the whole frame of it, brings low its high lofty Imaginations, and brings not only the outward actions, but the very thoughts unto the obedience of Chriſt.

Concerning theſe diſobedient unbelievers, theſe two teſtimonies taken together have in them, 1. Their rejection of Chriſt. 2. Their folly. 3. Their miſery in ſo doing.

1. They did not receive him, as the father appointed, and deſign'd him, as the foundation, and *chief corner ſtone*; but ſlighted him, and threw him by, as unfit for the building, and this did not only the ignorant multitude; But the builders, they that profeſs to have the skill, and the office, or power

of building. The Doctors of the Law, the Scribes, and Pharisees, and chief Priests, and think to carry the matter by the weight of their authority, as overbalancing the belief of those that followed Christ. *Have any of the rulers believed in him? But this People who know not the Law are cursed. John. 7. 48. 49.*

2. We need not wonder then, that not only the powers of the world are usualy enemies to Christ, and that the contrivers of policies, those builders, leave out Christ in their building, but that the pretended builders of the Church of God, though they use the name of Christ, and serve their turn with that, yet reject himself, and oppose the power of his spiritual kingdom. There may be Wit, and Learning, and much knowledge of the Scriptures amongst those that are haters of the Lord Christ, and the power of godliness, and corrupters of the worship of God. 'Tis the Spirit of humility, and obedience, and saving faith, that teaches Men to esteem of Christ, and build upon him.

But the vanity of those builders opinion appears in this, that they are over power'd by the great Architect of the Church, his purpose stands, notwithstanding their rejection of Christ, he is still made the head corner stone. They cast him away by their miscensures and reproaches put upon him, and by giving him up to be crucified, and then cast into the grave, and a stone to be roll'd upon this *Stone*, which they had so rejected, that it might appear no more, and so thought themselves sure: But even from thence, did he arise, and *became the head of the corner*. The disciples themselves spake (you know)

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very doubtfully of their former hopes, *We believ'd, this had been he, that would have delivered Israel*, but he corrected their miſtake, firſt by his word, ſhewing them the true method of that great work, *Ought not Chriſt to ſuffer firſt theſe things?* And *ſo enter into glory*, and then really, by making himſelf known to them, riſen from the dead. When he was from theſe rejected, and lay loweſt, then was he neareſt his exaltation, as *Joſeph* in the priſon, was neareſt his preferment. And thus is it with the Church of Chriſt; when 'tis brought to the loweſt deſperateſt condition, then is deliverance at hand; it proſpers, and gains in the event, by all the practices of Men againſt it. And as this corner ſtone was fitted to be ſo, by the very rejection; even ſo is it with the whole buliding, it riſes the higher the more Men ſeek to demoliſh it.

3. Their unhappineſs that believe not is expreſs'd, in the other word, *He is to them a ſtone of ſtumbling, and a rock of offence*, becauſe they will not be ſaved by him, they ſhall ſtumble, and fall, and be broken to pieces on him, as it is in *Eſay*, and in the Evangeliſts: But how is this? is he that came to ſave, become a deſtroyer of Men, he whoſe name is ſalvation, proves he deſtruction to any? Not he in himſelf, his primary and proper uſe is the former, to be a foundation for ſouls to build, and reſt upon; but they that in ſtead of building upon him, will ſtumble, and fall on him, what wonder, being ſo firm a ſtone, though they be broken by their fall; thus we ſee the miſchief of unbelief, that as other ſins diſable the Law, it diſables the very Goſpel to ſave us, and turns life it ſelf into death to us. And this is the miſery, not

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of a few, but of many in Israel, many that hear of Christ, by the preaching of the Gospel, shall lament, that ever they heard that sound, and shall wish to have liv'd and dyed without it, finding so great an accession to their misery, by the neglect of so great salvation. They are said to stumble at the word; because the things that are therein testified concerning Christ, they labour not to understand and prize aright; but either altogether slight them, and account them foolishness, or misconceive them, and prevert them.

The Jews stumbled at the meanes of Christ's birth, and life, and the ignominy of his death, not judging of him according to the Scriptures, and we in another way think we have some kind of belief, that he is the Saviour of the world, yet not making the Scripture the rule of our thoughts concerning him, many of us undo our selves, and stumble, and break our necks upon this Rock, mistaking Christ, and the way of believing; looking on him as a Saviour at large, and judging that enough; not endeavouring to make him ours, and to embrace him upon the termes of that New-Covenant, whereof he is Mediator.

Whereunto also they were appointed.] This the Apostle addes for the further satisfaction of Believers in this point; how 'tis that so many reject Christ and stumble at him? Telling them plainly, that the secret purpose of God is accomplish'd in this, having determin'd to glorify his justice on impenitent sinners, as he shews his rich mercy in them that believe. Here it were easier to lead you into a deep, than to lead you forth again. I will rather stand on

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the shoare, and silently admire it, than enter into it. This is certain that the thoughts of God are all no less just in themselves, than deep, and unsoundable by us. His justice appears clear, in that Mans destruction is alwayes the fruit of his own sin: But to give causes of Gods decrees, without himself, is neither agreeable with that primitive being of the nature of God, nor with the doctrine of the Scriptures; this is sure that God is not bound to give us further account of these things, and we are bound not to ask it. Let these two words (as *S. Austin* sayes) answer all *Who art thou O man?* And *O the depth!*

Our only sure way to know, that our names are not in that black line, and to be perswaded, that he hath chosen us to be saved by his Son, is this, to find that we have chosen him, and are built on him by faith, which is the fruit of his love, that first chuseth us: And that we may read in our esteem of him.

He is precious] *on your honour.* The difference is small you account him your glory, and your gain, he is not only precious to you, but preciousness it self. He is the thing that you make account of, your Jewel, that if you keep, though you be robb'd of all besides; you know your selves rich enough.

To you that Believe] Faith is absolutely necessary to make this due Estimat of Christ.

1. The most excellent things, while their worth is undiscern'd, and unknown, affect us not. Now faith is the proper seeing faculty of the soul, in relation to Christ, that inward light must be infus'd from above, to make Christ visible to us; without it, though he is beautiful, yet we are blind, and therefore cannot

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love him for that beauty, but by faith we are inabled to see him that is *fairer than the Children of Men*, yea, to see in him, *the glory of the only begotten Son of God*; and then it is not possible, but to account him precious, to bestow the entire affection of our hearts upon him. And if any say to the Soul *what is thy beloved, more than another*, it willingly layes hold on the question, and is glad of an opportunity to extoll him.

2. Faith as it is that which discernes Christ, so it alone appropriates him, makes him our own. And these are the two reasons of esteeming, and affecting any thing; its own worth, and our interest in it, and faith begets this esteem of Christ by both. 1. It discovers to us his excellencies, that we could not see before. 2. It makes him ours, gives us possession of whole Christ, all that he hath, and is. As it is faith that commends Christ so much, and describes his comelineſs in that song, and withal, that word is the voyce of faith, that expresses propriety, *My Wellbeloved is mine, and I am his*, and these together make him most precious to the soul, having once possession of him, then it looks upon all his sufferings as endur'd particularly for it, and the benefit of them all as belonging to it self; hence it will say, can it chuse but account him precious that suffer'd shame, that he might not be ashamed; and suffered death that he might not die; that took that bitter cup of the father's wrath, and drunk it out, that he might be free from it.

Think not that you believe, if your hearts be not taken up with Christ, if his love do not possesse your soul, so that nothing is precious to you in respect

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of him, if you cannot despise, and trample upon all advantages, that either you have or would have, for Christ, and count them with the great Apostle *loss and dung in comparison of him.* And if you do esteem him, labour for increase of Faith, that you may esteem him more; for as Faith growes, so will he still be more precious to you. And if you would have it grow, turn that Spiritual Eye frequently to him that's the proper object of it; for even they that are Believers may possibly abate of their love, and esteem of Christ, by suffering Faith to ly dead within them and not using it in beholding and applying of Christ: And the World, or some particular vanities, may insensibly creep in, and get into the heart, and cost them much paines ere they can be thrust out again, but when they are daily reviewing those excellencies that are in Christ, which first perswaded their hearts to love him, and discovering still more, and more of them, his Love will certainly grow, and will chase away those follies that the World dotes upon, as unworthy to be taken notice of.

Verse 9.

But ye are a chosen Generation, a Royal Priesthood, an holy Nation, a peculiar People, that ye should shew forth the Praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light.

IT is matter of very much both consolation, and instruction to Christians, to know their own estate, what they are, as they are Christians. This

Epiſtle is much and often upon this point for both thoſe ends, both, that the reflecting on their dignities in Chriſt, may uphold them with comfort under ſuffering for him, and may lead them in doing, and walking, as becomes ſuch a condition. Here it hath been repreſented to us by a building, a Spiritual Temple, and by a Prieſthood conform to it.

The former is confirm'd, and illuſtrated by teſtimonies of Scripture in the preceeding *Verſes*, In this the latter, in theſe words: tho 'tis not expreſly cited, yet 'tis clear, that the Apoſtle here hath reference to *Exod.* 19. 5, 6. where this dignity of Prieſthood, together with the other titles here expreſs'd, is aſcrib'd to all the choſen People of God. 'Tis there a promiſe made to the Nation of the Jewes, but under the condition of obedience, and therefore is moſt fitly here apply'd by the Apoſtle, to the believing Jews, to whom particularly he writes.

'Tis true, that the external Prieſthood of the Law, is aboliſh'd by the coming of this great high Prieſt; Jeſus Chriſt being the body of all thoſe ſhaddowes: But this promis'd Dignity of Spiritual Prieſthood, is ſo far from being nulled by Chriſt, that it is altogether dependant on him, and therefore fails in thoſe that reject Chriſt, although they be of that Nation, to which this Promiſe was made: But it holds good in all, of all Nations that believe, and particularly, ſayes the Apoſtle *'tis verified in you.* You that are believing Jewes, by receiving Chriſt, you receive w[illegible]al this dignity.

As the Legal Prieſthood was remov'd by Chriſts fulfilling all that it prefigur'd, ſo he was rejected by them that were at his coming in poſſeſſion of that Office: as

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the ſtanding of that their Prieſthood was inconſiſtent, with the revealing of Jeſus Chriſt; ſo they that were then in it, being ungodly Men, their carnal minds had a kind of antipathy againſt him, though they pretended themſelves builders of the Church, and by their calling ought to have been ſo, yet they threw away the foundation ſtone that God had choſen, and deſign'd; and in rejecting it, manifeſt that they themſelves are rejected of God; but on the contrary, You that have laid your ſoules on Chriſt by believing, have this your chuſing him as a certain evidence, that God hath choſen you to be his peculiar People, yea, to be ſo dignified, as to be a Kingly Prieſthood through Chriſt.

We have here 1. To Conſider the eſtate of Chriſtians, in the words that here deſcribe it. 2. The oppoſition of it to the eſtate of Unbelievers. 3. The end of it.

A choſen Generation,] *Pſal.* 24. The *Pſalmiſt* there ſpeaks firſt of Gods univerſal Soveraignty, then of his peculiar choyce. *The earth is the Lords.* But there is a ſelect company appointed for this holy Mountain deſcrib'd and then clos'd thus. *This is the generation of them that ſeek him.* Thus *Deut.* 10. 14, 15. So *Exod.* 19. 5. Whence this is taken; *for all the Earth is mine,* and that Nation which is a figure of the Elect of all Nations, Gods peculiar, beyond all others in the World. As Men that have great variety of Poſſeſſions, yet have uſually their ſpecial delight in ſome one, beyond all the reſt, and chuſe to recide moſt in it, and beſtow moſt expence on it, to make it pleaſant. Thus doth the Lord of the whole earth chuſe out to himſelf from the reſt of the World, a number that are *a choſen generation.*

Chuſing here, is the work of effectual calling, or ſevering of Believers from the reſt, for it ſignifies a difference in their preſent eſtate, as the other words joyned with it. But this election, is altogether conform to that of Gods Eternal Decree, and is no other, but the execution, or performance of it, Gods framing of this his building, juſt according to the *Idea* of it, which was in his mind, and purpoſe, before all time. The drawing forth, and inveſting of ſuch into this Chriſtian, this Kingly Prieſthood, whoſe names were expreſly written up for it, in the Book of life.

Generation] This imports them to be of one race, or ſtock, as the Iſraelites who were by outward calling the choſen of God, were all the ſeed of *Abraham* according to the fleſh: So they that believe in the Lord Jeſus; are Children of the Promiſe, and all of them by their new birth, one People or Generation, they are of one Nation, belonging to the ſame bleſſed Land of Promiſe, all Citizens of the new *Jeruſalem*, yea all Children of the ſame family whereof Jeſus Chriſt, the *root of Jeſſe*, is the ſtock, who is the great King, and the great high Prieſt, and thus they are a *Royal Prieſthood*, there is no devolving of his Royalty, or Prieſthood on any other, as it is in himſelf, for his proper dignity, is Supreme, and incommunicable, and there is no ſucceſſion in his Order, he *lives for ever*, and is *Prieſt for ever*. *Pſal.* 110. 4. and *King for ever* too, *Pſal.* 45. 6. but they that are deſcended from him, do derive from him by that new original this double dignity, in that way that they are capable of it, to be likewiſe Kings, and Prieſts; as he is both. They are of the

Seed.

Seed-Royal, and of the holy ſeed of the Prieſthood, in as much as they partake of a new life from Chriſt; Firſt there's his own dignity expreſs'd, then his dignifying us, who is himſelf the *firſt begotten among the dead, and the Prince of the Kings of the earth*, *Revel.* 1. 5. and then, as followes, *Verſe* 6. *hath made us Kings and Prieſts unto God the Father.*

A Royal Prieſthood] That the Dignity of Believers, is expreſs'd by theſe two together, by *Prieſthood* and *Royalty*, teaches us, the Worth and Excellency of that Holy Function taken properly, and ſo by analogy, the dignity of the Miniſtry of the Goſpel, which God hath plac'd in his Church in ſtead of the Prieſthood of the Law: for therefore doth this Title of Spiritual Prieſthood fitly ſignify a great Priviledge, and Honour, that Chriſtians are promoted to, and is joyn'd with that of Kings, becauſe the proper Office of Prieſthood was ſo Honourable. Before it was eſtabliſh'd in one Family, the chief, the firſt born of each Family had right to this, as a ſpecial Honour; and amongſt the Heathens in ſome places, their Princes, and greateſt Men, yea, their Kings were their Prieſts, and univerſally the performing of their Holy things, was an imployment of great Honour, and eſteem amongſt them. Though humane ambition hath ſtrain'd this conſideration too high, to the favouring, and founding of a Monarchical Prelacy in the Chriſtian World, yet that abuſe of it ought not to prejudge us of this due and juſt conſequence from it, that the holy Functions of Gods Houſe have very much Honour and Dignity in them. And the Apoſtle we ſee 2 *Cor.* 3. preferr's the Miniſtry of the Goſpel, to the Prieſthood

hood of the Law, ſo then they miſtake much that think it a diſparagement to Men that have ſome advantage of Birth, or Wit more than ordinary, to beſtow them thus, and judge the meaneſt Perſons, and things good enough for this high calling, ſure this conceit cannot have place, but in an unholy, Irreligious mind, that hath either none, or very mean thoughts of God. If they that are called to this Holy Service, would themſelves conſider this aright, it would not puff them up, but humble them; comparing their own worthleſneſs with this great work, and wonder at Gods diſpenſation, that ſhould have honour'd them ſo *Eph.* 3. 8. So the more a Man rightly extols this his Calling, the more he humbles himſelf under the weight of it, and would make them very careful to walk more like it in eminency of holineſs, for in that conſiſts the true dignity of it.

There is no doubt that this Kingly Prieſthood is the common Dignity of all Believers, *this honour have all the Saints*, they are Kings, have victory, and Dominion given them over the powers of darkneſs, and the luſts of their own hearts, that held them captive, and domineer'd over them before. Baſe ſlaviſh luſts, not born to command, yet are the hard taskmaſters of unrenewed minds, and there is no true ſubduing them, but by the power, and ſpirit of Chriſt; thay may be quiet for a while in a Natural Man, but they are but then aſleep, as ſoon as they awake again, they return to hurry, and drive him with their wonted violence. Now this is the benefit of receiving the Kingdom of Chriſt into a Mans heart, that it makes him a King himſelf, all the Subjects of Chriſt are Kings, not only in regard

of

of that pure Crown of Glory they hope for; and ſhall certainly attain: but in the preſent, they have a Kingdom, that is the pledge of that other, overcoming the World, and Satan, and themſelves, by the power of Faith. *Mens bona regnum poſſidet*, 'tis true, but there is no mind truly good, but that wherein Chriſt dwells. There is not any kind of Spirit in the World Noble, like that Spirit that is in a Chriſtian, the very Spirit of Jeſus Chriſt that great King, the *ſpirit of glory*, as our Apoſtle calls it *infr.* c. 4. This is a ſure way to enoble the baſeſt, and pooreſt amongſt us, this Royalty takes away all attendors, nothing of all that is paſt to be laid to our charge, or to diſhonour us.

They are not ſhut out from God, as before: But being in Chriſt are brought neer unto him, and have free acceſs to the Throne of his grace, *Heb.* 10. They reſemble in their Spiritual eſtate the legal Prieſthood very clearly. 1. In their Conſecration. 2. In their ſervice, and 3. In their Laws of living.

1. They were waſh'd; therefore this expreſs'd *Revel.* v. 5. *He hath waſht us in his Blood*, and then followes, *made us Kings and Prieſts*. There were no coming near unto God in his holy Services as his Prieſts, unleſs we were cleans'd from the guiltineſs and pollution of our ſins. This that pure and purging Blood doth, and it alone, no other Laver can do it, no water, but that *fountain opened for ſin, and for uncleanneſs*. No blood, none of all that blood of Legal Sacrifices, *Heb.* 9. but only the Blood of that ſpotleſs Lamb, that *takes away the ſins of the World*. So with this, we have that other Ceremony of the Prieſts Conſecration, which was by Sacrifice

crifice, as well as by washing, for he at once offer'd up himself, as our Sacrifice, and let out his blood for our washing, and with good reason, is that prefix'd there *Revel.* 1. 5. *He hath loved us*, and then it followes, *washed us in his blood*, that precious stream of his heart blood, for our washing, told clearly, that it was a heart full of unspeakable Love that was the source of it. 3. There is anointing, Namely, The graces of the Spirit, conferr'd upon Believers, flowing untothem from Christ: For *'tis of his fulness, that we all receive, grace, for grace*, and the Apostle St. *Paul* sayes 2 *Cor.* 1. 21. that *we are establish'd, and anointed in Christ*, it was poured on him, as our head, and runs down from him unto us. *He Christ and we Christians*, as partakers of his anointing. The consecrating Oyl of the Priests, was made of the richest Oyntments, and Spices, to shew the preciousness of the graces of Gods Spirit, that are bestow'd on those Spiritual Priests, and as that holy Oyl was not for common use, nor for any other Persons to be anointed withal, save the Priests only; so is the Spirit of grace, a peculiar gift of Believers; others might have costly oyntments amongst the Jewes, but none of that same sort with the Consecration-Oyl. Natural Men may have very great gifts of Judgment and Learning, and eloquence, and Moral Vertues; but they have none of this precious Oyl, Namely, the spirit of Christ communicated to them. No, all their endowments, are but common and profane, that Holy Oyl signified particularly, Eminency of light, and knowledge in the Priests; therefore in Christians there must be light, they that are grosly ignorant of Spiritual things, are (sure) not of this order,

order, this anointing is ſaid *to teach us all things*, 1. *John.* 2. 27. That holy Oyl was of a moſt fragrant ſweet ſmell, by reaſon of its precious compoſition, but much more ſweet is the ſmell of that Spirit, wherewith believers are anointed, thoſe ſeveral odoriferous graces, that are the ingredients of their anointing oyl, that heavenly mindedneſs, and meekneſs, and patience, and humility, and the reſt, that diffuſe a pleaſing ſent into the places, and ſocieties where they come; their words, actions, and their deportment ſmelling ſweet of them. 4. Their garments wherein they were inaugurate, and were after to wear in their ſervices, were outſhin'd by that purity, and holineſs, wherewith all the Saints are adorn'd: But more by that imputed righteouſneſs of Chriſt, thoſe pure Robes, that are put upon them, wherein they appear before the Lord, and are acceptable in his ſight, theſe Prieſts are indeed *cloath'd with righteouſneſs*, according to that of the Pſalmiſt *Pſa.* 132. 9.

5. They were to have the offerings put into their hands; from thence, *filling of the hand*, ſignifies conſecrating to the Prieſtood, and this doth Jeſus Chriſt, that is the Conſecrator of theſe Prieſts, he puts into their hands by his ſpirit theſe offerings, they are to preſent unto God. He furniſhes them with prayers, and praiſes, and all other oblations, that are to be offer'd by them, he gives them themſelves, that they are to offer a living ſacrifice, reſcuing them from the uſurp'd poſſeſſion of Satan and ſin.

2*ly*. Let us Conſider, their ſervices which were divers; to name the chief: They had charge of the

Sanctuary, and the veſſels of it, and the lights, and were to keep the Lamps burnings.

The heart of every Chriſtian, is made a Temple to the holy Ghoſt, and he himſelf, as a prieſt conſecrated unto God, is to keep it diligently, and the furniture of divine grace in it, to have the light of Spiritual knowledge with in him, and to nouriſh it by drawing continually new ſupplies from Jeſus Chriſt. 2*ly*. They were to bleſs the People, and truely 'tis this Spiritual Prieſthood, *the Elect*, that procure bleſſings upon the reſt of the world, and particularly on the places where they live; they are daily to offer the incenſe of prayer, and other Spiritual ſacrifices unto God, as the Apoſtle expreſſeth it, *ſupr. Verſe.* 5. Not to neglect thoſe holy exerciſes together, and apart. And as the Prieſts offer'd not only for themſelves; but for the People: thus Chriſtians, are to extend their prayers, and to intreat the bleſſings of God, for others, eſpecially for the publick eſtate of the Church. As the Lords Prieſts they are to offer up thoſe Praiſes to God, that are his due from the other creatures which praiſe him indeed, yet cannot do it after that manner, as theſe Prieſts do. Therefore are they to offer as it were their Sacrifices for them, as the Prieſts did for the People, and becauſe the moſt of Men neglect to do this, and cannot do it indeed, becauſe they are unholy, and not of this Prieſthood; therefore ſhould they be ſo much the more careful of it, and diligent in it. How few of thoſe that the Heavens calls to by their light and revolution that they enjoy, do offer that Sacrifice which becomes, for this acknowledging *the glory of God which they declare.* This therefore is, as it were, put

into

into the hands of these Priests, namely, the Godly, to do.

3*ly*. Let us Consider their course of life. We shall find rules given to the Legal Priests, stricter than to others; of avoiding legal pollutions, *&c*. And from these this Spiritual Priesthood must learn an exact holy conversation, keeping themselves from the pollutions of the world, as here it follows, *a holy Nation*, and that of necessity, if a Priestood, than holy.

Purchas'd indeed to be a peculiar treasure to God, as *Exod*. 19. 5. at a very high rate. He spared not his only Son, nor spared the Son himself; so that these Priests ought to be the Lords peculiar portion: All believers are his *Clergy*, and as they are his portion so he is theirs: The priests had no assign'd Inheritance amongst their Brethren, and the reason is added, for the *Lord is their portion*; and truely so they needed not envy any of the rest, they had the choyceſt of all, the Lord of all. Whatsoever a Christian possesses in the world, yet being of this Spiritual Priesthood, he is as if he possess'd it not, lays little account on't: That which his mind is set on, is, how he may enjoy God, and find clear assurance that he hath him for his portion.

'Tis not so mean a thing, to be a Christian, as we think, 'tis a Holy, an Honourable, a Happy estate; few of us can esteem it, or do labour to find it so. No, we know not these things, our hearts are not on them, to make this dignity and happiness sure unto our souls. Where is that true greatness of mind, and holiness to be found, that becomes those, that are *Kings*, and *Priests* unto God? That contempt

of earthly things, and minding of Heaven that ſhould be in ſuch? But ſure, as many as find themſelves indeed partakers of theſe dignities, will ſtudy to live conform to them, and will not fail to love that Lord Jeſus, that hath purchas'd all this for them, and exalted them to it, humbled himſelf to exalt them.

We beſt diſcern, and are moſt ſenſible of the evils and good of things, by compariſon. In outward condition how many be there, that are vexing themſelves with cauſleſs murmurings, and diſcontents, that if they would look upon the many in the world that are in a far meaner condition than they, it would cure that evil, and make them not only content, but chearfull and thankfull: But the difference here expreſs'd is far greater, and more conſiderable, than any can be in outward things. Though the eſtate of a Chriſtian is very excellent, and precious, and rightly valued hath enough in it ſelf to commend it, yet it doth, and ought to raiſe our eſteem of it the higher, when we compare it, both with the miſery of our former condition, and the continuing miſery of thoſe that abide ſtill, and are left to periſh in that wofull eſtate. We have here both theſe parallels. The happineſs and dignity to which they are choſen, and called, is oppos'd to the rejection, and miſery of them that continue unbelievers, and rejecters of Chriſt.

Not only Naturall Men; but even they that have a ſpiritual life in them, yet when they forget themſelves, are ſubject to look upon the things that are before them with a natural eye, and to think hardly, or at leaſt doubtfully concerning Gods diſpenſation, Beholding the flouriſhing, and proſperities of the ungodly together with their own ſufferings,

and

and diſtreſſes, thus *Pſa. 73. &c.* But when they turn the other ſide of the Medal, and view them with a right eye, and by a true light, they are no longer abus'd with thoſe appearances, When they conſider unbelievers, as ſtrangers, yea enemies to God, and ſlaves to Satan, held faſt in the chains of their own impenitency, and unbelief, and by thoſe bound over to eternal death, and then ſee themſelves call'd to the liberties, and dignities of the Sons of God, partakers of the honour of the only begotten Sons, on whom they have believed, made by him *Kings, and Prieſts unto God the father:* then ſure they have other thoughts, it makes them no more envy, but pity the ungodly, and account all their pomp, and all their poſſeſſions, what it is indeed, no other, but a gliſtering miſery, and themſelves happy in all eſtates to ſay with *David. The lines have fallen to me in a pleaſant place, I have a goodly heritage.* Makes them digeſt all their ſufferings, and diſgraces with patience, yea with joy; and think more of praiſing, than complaining, of ſhewing forth his honour, who hath ſo honoured them, eſpecially conſidering the freeneſs of his grace, that it was that alone ma.e the difference, calling them altogether undeſervedly from that ſame darkneſs, and miſery in which unbelievers are deſervedly left.

Now the third thing here to be ſpoken to, is the end of their calling, *to ſhew his praiſe, &c.* And the more to prize the reaſonableneſs of that their happy eſtate, to which God hath exalted them, it is expreſs'd in other termes, which therefore we will firſt conſider, and then the end.

To magnifie the grace of God the more, we have here

here 1. Both the termes of this motion, or change from whence, and to what it is. 2. The Principle of it, the calling of God.

From darkneſs. There is nothing more uſual not only in divine, but in humane writings, than to borrow outward ſenſible things, to expreſſe things intellectual; and amongſt ſuch expreſſions, there is none more frequent, than that of *Light* and *darkneſs*, transfer'd, to ſignifie the good, and evil eſtate of Man, as ſometimes for his outward proſperity, or adverſity, but eſpecially for things proper to his mind, the mind is called Light becauſe the Seat of Truth, and Truth is moſt fitly called Light being the chief beauty, and ornament of the rational world, as Light is of the viſible. And as the Light, becauſe of that its beauty is a thing very refreſhing, and comfortable to them that behold it, as *Salomon* ſayes *'tis a pleaſant thing to ſee the ſun.* So is Truth, a moſt delightfull thing to the ſoul that rightly apprehends it.

This may help us, to conceive of the Spiritual ſenſe, in which it is here taken. The eſtate of Loſt Mankind, is indeed nothing, but darkneſs, being deſtitute of all Spirituall truth, and comfort, and tending to utter and everlaſting darkneſs.

And it is ſo, becauſe by ſin the ſoul is ſeparate from God, who is the firſt and higheſt light, that primitive truth, as he is light in himſelf, As the Apoſtle S. *John* tells us, *God is light, and in him there is no darkneſs at all*; expreſſing the excellency, and purity of his nature, ſo he is light relatively to the ſoul of Man. *Pſa.* 27. *the Lord is my light* ſayes, *David.*

And

And the soul being made capable of divine light, cannot be happy without it, give it what other light you will, still 'tis in darkness, so long as 'tis without God, being the peculiar light, and life of the soul. And as truth is united with the soul in apprehending it, and light with the visive faculty, so, that the soul may have God as its light, it must of necessity be in union with God. Now sin hath broke that union, and so cut off the soul from its light, and implung'd it into spiritual darkness.

Hence all that confusion, and disorder in the soul, which is ever the companion of darkness *Tohu vabohu*, as at first, when darkness was on the face of the deep: Being ignorant of God, and of our selves, it follows that we love not God; *because we know him not*, yea (though we think it a hard word) we are haters of God, for not only doth our darkness import Ignorance of him, but *an enmity* to him, because he is light and we are darkness. And being ignorant of our selves, not seeing our own vileness, because we are in the dark, we are pleas'd with our selves, and having left God, do love our selves instead of God. Hence are all the wickednesses of our hearts, and lives, which are no other but in place of obeying, and pleasing God, a continual Sacrificing to those *Gillulim*, those base dunghill Gods, our own lusts. For this the Apostle gives, as the root of all those evils 2 *Tim.* 3. 2. *covetous, boasters* &c. Because in the first place, *lovers of themselves*, therefore *proud*, &c. And *lovers of pleasures more than of God*; and this self-love cannot subsist without gross ignorance, minds so darkned, that we cannot withal see what we are: For

if

if we did, it were not possible, but we would be far of another mind, very far out of loving, and liking with our selves. Thus our souls being filled with darkness, are likewise full of uncleaness; as that goes along too with darkness, they are not only dark as dungeons, but withall filthy as they use to be, so *Eph.* 4. 18. *understandings darkned, alienated from the life of God.* And therefore *Ver.* 19. *give themselves over unto lasciviousness, to work all uncleaness with greediness.* They have no light of solid comfort. Our great comfort here is not in any thing present; but in hope now *being without Christ and without God, we are without hope Eph.* 2. 12.

And as the estate from whence we are called by grace, is worthily called Darkness, so that to which it calls us deserves as well the name of Light. As Christ likewise, that came to work our deliverance, is frequently so call'd in Scripture *Jo.* 1. *&c.* Not only in regard of his own nature, being God equal with the father, and therefore light, as he is *God of God*, and therefore *Light of light*: But relating to Men *John.* 1. 4. *that life was the light of Men.* as he is stiled *the word*, and *the wisdom of the father*, not only in regard of his own knowledge; but as revealing him unto us *John.* 1. 18. 1 *Cor.* 1. 24. Compared with *Ver.* 30. And stiled by *Malachy the sun of righteousness.* Now the sun, is not only a Luminous body, but a Luminary giving light unto the world, *Gen.* 1.

He is our light, oppos'd to all kind of darkness: to the dark shaddow's of the ceremonial Law, which possibly is here meant, as a part of that darkness, from

from which the Apoſtle Writes that theſe Jews were delivered alſo by the knowledge of Chriſt: When he came, *the day broke, and the ſhaddowes flew away*: To the darkneſs likewiſe of the Gentiles ſuperſtitions, and Idolatries; therefore theſe two are joyned by old *Simeon, a light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of his People Iſrael.*

And to all that believe of both, he is Light oppos'd to the Ignorance, and ſlavery, and miſery of their natural eſtate, teaching them by his Spirit, the things of God, and reuniting them with God, who is the light of the Soul. I am ſayes he, *the light of the World, he that followes me ſhall not walk in darkneſs.*

And it is that myſterious Union of the Soul with God in Chriſt (which a Natural Man ſo little underſtands) that is the cauſe of all that Spiritual Light of Grace, that a Believer does enjoy.

No right knowledge of God to Man, once fallen from it, but in his Son, no comfort in beholding God, but through him. Nothing but juſt anger and wrath to be ſeen in Gods lookes, but through him, *in whom he is well pleaſed.*. The Goſpel ſhews us the Light of the knowledge of God. 2 *Cor.* 4. 6. but 'tis *in the face of Jeſus Chriſt*; therefore the Kingdom of light, oppos'd to that of Darkneſs, *Col.* 1. is called *the Kingdom of his dear Son*, or the *Son of his Love.*

There is a Spirit of Light, and Knowledge flowes from Jeſus Chriſt into the Souls of Believers, that acquaints them with the Myſteries of the Kingdom of God, which cannot otherwiſe be known. And this Spirit of Knowledge is withal a Spirit of Holineſs, for Purity, and Holineſs is likewiſe ſignified by this Light; he remov'd that huge dark body of ſin, that

was betwixt us, and the Father, and eclips'd him from us; the light of his countenance *sanctifieth by truth*; 'tis a light that hath heat with it, and hath influence upon the affections, warmes them towards God, and divine things, this darkness here is indeed the shadow of death; and so they that are without Christ, till he visit them, are said *to sit in darkness, and in the shadow of death*. So this *Light* is *Life*, *Joh.* 1. 4. Doth enlighten, and enliven, begets new actions, and motions in the Soul, the right notion that he hath of things as they are, work upon him, and stir him accordingly, discovers a man to himself, and lets him see his own Natural filthiness, and makes him loath himself, and fly from himself, run out of himself. And the excellency he sees in God, and his Son Jesus Christ by this new Light, enflames his heart with their Love, takes him up with estimation of the Lord Jesus, and makes the World, and all things in it, that he esteemed before, base, and mean in his eyes.

Then from this Light arises Spiritual Joy, and Comfort, so Light signifies frequently, as in that of the *Psalmist*, the latter clause expounds the former, *Light is sowen for the Righteous, and joy for the upright in heart.* As this *Kingdom of Gods dear Son*, that is, this Kingdom of *Light*, hath righteousness in it; so it hath *Peace and Joy in the Holy Ghost*, *Rom.* 14. 'Tis a false prejudice the World hath taken up against Religion, that 'tis a sowr Melancholly thing: There is no truly Lightsome, and Comfortable life but it. All others, have what they will, they live in darkness, and is not that truly sad, and comfortless? Would you think it a pleasant life, though you had

fine

fine Cloathes, and good Diet; but never see the Sun; and were still kept in a Dungeon with them: thus are they that live in Worldly Honour and Plenty; but still without God they are in continual darkness with all their injoyments.

It is true, the light of Believers is not here perfect, and therefore their joy is not perfect neither: sometimes over clouded, but the comfort is this, that it is an everlasting light, it shall never go out in darkness, as is said in *Job of the light of the Wicked*; and it shall within a while be perfected. There is a bright morning without a Cloud, that shall arise. The Saints have not only Light to lead them in their journey, but much purer Light at home, *an Inheritance in Light*, *Colos.* 1. The Land where their Inheritance lyeth, is full of Light, and their Inheritance it self is light: For the Vision of God for ever is that Inheritance, that City hath no need of the Sun, nor of the Moon to shine in it, for *the glory of the Lord doth lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof.* As we said that increated Light is the happiness of the Soul, the beginnings of it are our begun happiness, they are beams of it sent from above, to lead us to the Fountain and fulness of it. *with thee* (says *David*) *is the Fountain of Life, and in thy Light shall we see light.*

There are two things spoken of this Light, to commend it, *His Marvellous Light*; that it is after a peculiar manner *Gods*, and then that is is *Marvellous*. All light is from him, the light of sense, and that of reason; therefore he is called the *Father of Lights*: but this *Light* of Grace is after a peculiar manner his, being a light above the reach of Nature, in-

fus'd into the Soul, in a ſupernatural way. The light of the Elect World, where God ſpecially and graciouſly recides. Natural Men may know very much, in natural things, and it may be in ſupernatural things, after a natural manner. They may be full of School-Divinity, and able to diſcourſe of God, and his Son Chriſt, and the Myſtery of Reden.p-tion, *&c.* and yet want this peculiar light, by which Chriſt is known to Believers, they may ſpeak of him; but 'tis in the dark, they ſee him not, and therefore they love him not, the light they have, is as the light of ſome things that ſhine only in the night, a cold Glow-worm-light that hath no heat with it at all.

Whereas a Soul, that hath ſome of His Light, Gods peculiar Light communicated to it, ſees Jeſus Chriſt, and loves, and delights in Him, and walks with Him: A little of this light is worth a great deal, yea, more worth than all that other common, ſpeculative, and diſcourſing knowledge, that the greateſt Doctors can attain unto, 'tis of a more excellent kind, and original, 'tis from Heaven, and ye know that one beam of the Sun is more worth than the light of ten thouſand Torches together; 'tis a pure undecaying Heavenly light, whereas the other is, groſs, and earthly (be it never ſo great) and laſts but a while. Let us not therefore think it Incredible, that a poor unletter'd Chriſtian may know more of God in the beſt kind of knowledge, than any the wiſeſt, and Learnedeſt natural Man can do, for the one knowes God only by Mans Light, the other knowes him by his own light, and that's the only right knowledge; as the Sun cannot be ſeen but by its own light, ſo neither can

God

God be ſavingly known, but by his own revealing.

Now this Light being ſo peculiarly Gods, no marvel if it be *Marvellous*, the common light of the world is ſo, though becauſe of its commoneſs, we think not ſo, The Lord is Marvellous in Wiſdom, in Power, in all his works of Creation, and Providence: But above all, in the workings of his Grace. This Light is unknown to the World, and ſo *Marvellous* in the rareneſs of beholding it, that there be but a few that partake of it. And to them that ſee, it is *Marvellous*; becauſe in it, they ſee ſo many excellent things, that they knew not before. As if a Man were born, and brought up, till he came to years of underſtanding in a Dungeon, where he had never ſeen light, and were brought forth on a ſudden; or, not to need that imagination, take the Man that was born blind, at his firſt ſight, after Chriſt had cur'd him, what wonder, think we, would ſeize upon him, to behold on a ſudden the beauty of this viſible World, eſpecially of that Sun, and that Light, that makes it both Viſible and Beautiful. But much more matter of Admiration is there in this Light to the Soul, that is brought newly from the darkneſs of corrupt Nature: They ſee as it were a new World, and in it ſuch wonders of the rich Grace, and Love of God; ſuch matchleſs worth in Jeſus Chriſt, the Sun of Righteouſneſs, that their Souls are fill'd with admiration, and if this Light of Grace be ſo Marvellous, how much more Marvellous ſhall the Light of Glory be in which it ends.

Hence learn, 1. To Eſteem highly of the Goſpel, in which this Light ſhines unto us, the Apoſtle calls it therefore, the *Glorious Goſpel*, 2 *Cor.* 4. ſure we

have

have no cauſe to be aſham'd of it, but of our ſelves that we are ſo unlike it.

2. Think not you that are groſly ignorant of God, and his Son Chriſt, and the Myſteries of Salvation, that you have any Portion as yet in his Grace; for the firſt Character of his renewed Image in the Soul, is Light, as it was his firſt work in the World. What availes it us to live in the Noon-day-light of the Goſpel, if our hearts be ſtill ſhut againſt it, and ſo within we be nothing but darkneſs, as a Houſe that is cloſe ſhut up, and hath no entry for light, though 'tis day without, ſtill 'tis night within.

3. Conſider your delight in the works of Darkneſs, and be affraid of that great Condemnation, *this is the Condemnation of the world, that light is come into it, and Men love darkneſs rather than Light*, Joh. 3. 19.

4. You that are indeed partakers of this happy change, Let your hearts be habitations of light, *Have no fellowſhip with the unfruitful works of darkneſs, but rather reprove them.* Study much to increaſe in Spiritual light, and knowledge, and withal in holineſs, and obedience; if your light be this Light of God, truly Spiritual Light, theſe will accompany it: Conſider the rich Love of God, and account His Light *marvellous*, as in it ſelf, ſo in this, that he hath beſtow'd it on you, and ſeeing you were once darkneſs, but now are light in the Lord, I beſeech you, nay 'tis the Apoſtle and in him the Spirit of God does it, *Walk as Children of the Light.*

But to proceed to ſpeak to the other parts of this *Verſe.* 'Tis known, and confeſs'd to be a chief point

of

of Wiſdom in a Man, to conſider what he is, from whom he hath that his being, and to what end. When a Chriſtian hath thought on this in his Natural being, as he is a Man, he hath the ſame to conſider over again of his Spiritual being, as he is a Chriſtian, and ſo, a New Creature. And in this notion all the three are very clearly repreſented to him in theſe words. 1. What he is. Firſt, by theſe Titles of Dignity in the firſt words of this *Verſe*. And again by an eſtate of Light in the laſt clauſe of it. 2. Whence a Chriſtian hath this Excellent being, is very expreſſe here, *He hath called*. That God, who is the Author of all kind of being, hath given you this, *called you from darkneſs to his marvellous Light*, if you be *a Choſen Generation*, it is he that hath choſen you, 1 *Pet.* 1. 2. if you be *a Royal Prieſthood*, you know that 'tis he that hath anointed you. If *a Holy Nation*, he hath ſanctified you. *Job.* 17. 17. If *a Peculiar* or *Purchaſd People*, 'Tis he that hath bought you. 1 *Cor.* 6. 20. All are in this calling, and they are all one thing. 3. To what end, to *ſhew forth his Praiſes*. Of the firſt of theſe in all the ſeveral expreſſions of it we have ſpoken before, now are to be conſidered the other two.

2. *Called you*] They that live in the Society, and profeſs the faith of Chriſtians, are called unto *Light*, the light of the Goſpel that ſhines in the Church of God. Now this is no ſmall Favour, and Priviledge, while many People are left *in darkneſs, and in the ſhaddow of death*, to have this Light ariſe upon us, and to be in the Region of it, the Church, the *Goſhen* of the World, for by this outward light we are invited to this happy State of ſaving inward Light,

Light, and that is here to be understood, as the means of this. These Jewes that were called to the Profession of the Christian Faith, to whom our Apostle writes, were even in that called unto a Light, hid from the rest of their Nation, and from many other Nations in the World: But because the Apostle doth (out of doubt) describe here the lively Spiritual Estate of true Believers, therefore this calling doth further import the effectual work of conversion, making the day-light of Salvation, not only without, but within them, *the day star to arise in their hearts*, as he speaks, 2 *Ep.* 1. 19. When the Sun is arisen, yet if a Man be lying fast in a dark Prison, and in a deep sleep too; 'tis not day to him, he is not call'd to Light, till some open the doors, and awake him, and bring him forth to it; this God doth, in the calling here meant: That which is here called, *Calling*, in regard of the way of Gods working with the Soul, in regard of the power of it, is called a rescuing, & bringing forth of the soul, so the Apostle St. *Paul* speaks of it, *Col.* 1. 13. *Delivered from the power of darkness, and translated to the Kingdom of his dear Son.* That delivering, and translating, is this *calling*, and 'tis from the *Power of Darkness*, a forcible Power, that detains the Soul Captive, as there are chaines of Eternal darkness upon damned Spirits, which shall never be taken off, wherein they are said to be reserv'd to the judgment of the great day, so there are chaines of Spiritual darkness upon the Soul unconverted, that can be taken off by no other hand, but the Powerful hand of God; He calls the sinner to come forth, and withal causes by the power of that his voyce the bolts, and fetters to fall off, and inables the Soul

to

to come forth into the Light, 'tis an operative word that effects what it bids, as that in the creation, *He ſaid let there be Light, and it was Light.* To which the Apoſtle hath reference, 2 *Cor.* 4. 6. God calls Man, he works with him indeed, as with a reaſonable creature, but ſure he likewiſe works as himſelf, as an Almighty Creator. He works ſtrongly, and ſweetly with an Almighty eaſineſs. One Man may call another to this Light, and if there be no more, he may call long enough to no purpoſe, as they tell of *Mahomet's* miracle that miſgave, he call'd a mountain to come to him, but it ſtirr'd not; but His call that ſhakes and removes the mountains, doth in a way known to himſelf turn and wind the heart which way he pleaſeth. *The voyce of the Lord is powerfull and full of Majeſty.* *Pſa.* 29. If he ſpeak once to the heart it cannot chuſe but follow Him, and yet moſt willingly chuſes that. The workings of grace (as oyl to which it is often compar'd) do inſenſibly, and ſilently penetrate, and ſink into the ſoul, and dilate themſelves through it, that word of his *own calling*, diſentangles the heart from all its nets (as it did the Diſciples) to follow Chriſt; that call that brought St. *Matthew* preſently from his receit of cuſtom, puts off the heart from all its cuſtomes, and receits too, makes it reject gains, and pleaſures, and all that hinders it, to go after Chriſt: And it is a call that touches the Soul ſo, as the touch of *Elijah's* Mantle, that made *Eliſha* follow him. *Go back* ſaid he, *for what have I done unto thee*, yet he had done ſo much, as made him forſake all to go with him. And this every Believer is moſt really to acknow-

ledge, that knows what the rebellion of his heart was and what his miſerable love of darkneſs was, that the gracious, yet mighty call of God, was that, which drew him him out of it, and therefore he willingly aſſents to that. Which is the third thing, that it becomes him, *to ſhew forth his praiſe* who hath ſo mercifully, and ſo powerfully called him, from ſo miſerable, to ſo happy an eſtate.

For 1. This is Gods end in calling us, to communicate his goodneſs to us, that ſo the glory of it, may return to himſelf. The higheſt agent cannot work, but for the higheſt end, ſo that, as the Apoſtle ſpeaks, when God would confirm his Covenant by an oath, *he ſware by himſelf*, becauſe he could ſwear by no greater, ſo in all, he muſt be the end of his own actions, becauſe there is no greater, nor better end, yea none by infinite odds ſo great, or good, particularly in the calling, and exalting a number of loſt Mankind to ſo great honour, and happineſs, both in deſigning that great work, and in performing it, he aimes at the opening up, and declaring of his *rich grace*, for the glory of it. As the Apoſtle S. *Paul* tells us once, and again. *Eph.* 1.

2. As this is Gods end, it ought to be ours, and therefore ours, becauſe it is His. And for this very purpoſe, are we elſewhere, and here, put in mind of it, that we may be true to his end, and intend it with Him: This is His purpoſe in calling us, and therefore our great duty being ſo called, to declare his praiſes. All things, and perſons ſhall pay this tribute; even they that are moſt unwilling: But the happineſs of His choſen is, that they are active in it, others paſſive only: Whereas, the reſt have it wreſted from them,

they

they do declare it cheerfully, as the glorious Angels do: As the Goſpel brings them glad tydings of peace from God, declares to them, that love, and mercy that is in Him, they ſmother it not, but anſwer it, they declare it, and ſet forth the glory of it, with their utmoſt power, and ſkill.

There be in this Two things. 1. Not only to ſpeak upon all occaſions to the advantage of his grace, but that the frame of their actions be ſuch as doth tend to the exalting of God: And 2. That in thoſe actions they do intend this end, ſet up this for their aim.

1. Their words and actions being conform to their high, and holy eſtate, to which they are called, do commend, and praiſe their Lord, that hath called them to it; the vertues that are in them tell us of his vertues, as Brooks lead us to their Springs: When a Chriſtian can quietly repoſe, and truſt on God, in a matter of very great difficulty, wherein there is no other thing to ſtay him but God alone, this declares, that there is ſtrength enough in God that bears him up, that there muſt be in Him that real abundance of goodneſs, and truth that the word ſpeaks of Him. *Abraham believed, and gave glory to God*, this is that which a Believer can do, to declare the truth of God, he relies on it, *he that believes ſets to his ſeal that God is true.* So alſo their holineſs is for his praiſe. Men hear that there is a God who is infinitely holy, but they can neither ſee him, nor his holineſs, but when they perceive ſome lineaments of it in the faces of His Children, which are in no others; this may convince them that its perfection, which muſt be ſomewhere, can be no where elſe, but in their heavenly Father.

When theſe that are His peculiar plants bring forth the fruits of holineſs, which naturally they yielded not, it teſtifies a ſupernatural work of his hand, that planted them, and the more they are fruitful the greater is his praiſe. *Herein* (ſayes our Saviour) *is your heavenly Father glorified, that ye bring forth much fruit.* Were it not the conſcience of this duty to God, and poſſibly the neceſſity of their ſtation, and calling, it may well be, ſome Chriſtian had rather altogether look up, and keep within any grace he hath, than let it appear at all, conſidering ſome hazards he and it runs in the diſcovery: and it may be could take ſome pleaſure in the worlds miſtakes, and diſeſteem of him: But ſeeing both Piety, and Charity requires the acting of graces in converſe with Men, That which Hypocriſie doth for it ſelf, a real Chriſtian may, and ſhould do for God. The other thing mention'd as making up this rule, will give the difference, that not only, what we ſpeak and do ſhould be ſuch as agrees with this end, but that in ſo ſpeaking and doing our eye be upon this end, that all our Chriſtian converſation, be directly intended by us, not to cry up our own vertues, but to glorifie God, and His vertues, *to declare his praiſes who hath called us.*

Let your light, ſayes our Saviour, *ſhine* and *ſhine before Men too*, that's not forbidden, yea 'tis commanded, but 'tis thus commanded. *Let your light ſo ſhine before Men, that Men ſeeing your good works*, your ſelves as little as may be, your works more than your ſelves (as the Sun gives us its light, and will ſcarce ſuffer us to look upon it ſelf) *may glorifie* whom? You. No, *but your father which is in heaven.*

ven. Let your light ſhine, 'tis given for that purpoſe, but let it ſhine alwayes to the glory of the Father of Lights. Men that ſeek themſelves, may ſhare in the ſame publick kind of actions with you; but let your ſecret intention (which God eyes moſt) ſever you. This is the impreſs, that a ſincere humble Chriſtian ſets upon all his actions, to the glory of God: He uſeth all he hath, eſpecially all his graces to His praiſe that gives it, and is ſorry he hath no more for this uſe and is daily ſeeking after more, not to bring more eſteem to himſelf, but more honour to God. 'Tis a poor booty to hunt after that, Namely, an airy vain breath of Men. The beſt things in them, their ſolideſt good, is altogether vanity. How much more that which is lighteſt and vaineſt in them. This is the mind, that is in every Chriſtian, in all his wayes to deny himſelf, and be willing to abaſe himſelf to exalt his Maſter, to be of St. *Paul's* temper, that regarded not himſelf at all, honour, or diſhonour, priſon or liberty, life or death, content of any thing, ſo Chriſt might be magnified. *Phil.* 1. And as every godly mind, muſt be thus affected, eſpecially the Miniſters of the Goſpel, they that are not only called with others, to partake of this marvellous Light, but are in a ſpecial manner to hold it forth to others; How pure affections, and ardent deſires becomes them to his glory, who hath ſo called them? A ruſh for your praiſe, or diſpraiſe, only receive Jeſus Chriſt, and eſteem highly of him, and 'tis enough. That's the thing we give to ſome of you. *We preach not our ſelves* (ſayes the Apoſtle) *but Chriſt Jeſus the Lord.* That's our errand, not to to catch, either at baſe gain, or vain applauſe for

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our ſelves: But to exalt our Lord Jeſus, in the hearts of Men, and to thoſe that are ſo minded, there is a reward abiding them, of ſuch riches, and honour, as they would be very loath to exchange for any thing to be had amongſt Men.

But in his ſtation, this is the mind of every one, that loves the Lord Jeſus moſt heartily, to make a Sacrifice of himſelf, and all he is, and hath, means, and eſteem, and life, and all to His glory, that humbled himſelf ſo low, to exalt us to theſe dignities, to *make us Kings and Prieſts unto God.*

'Tis moſt juſt, ſeeing we have our Crowns from Him, and that he hath ſet them on our heads, that we take them in our hands, and throw them down before his throne. All our graces (if we have any) are his free gift, and are given as the rich garments of this Spiritual Prieſthood, only to attire us, ſutably for this Spiritual Sacrifice of his praiſes. As the coſtly veſture of the high Prieſt under the Law, was not appointed to make himſelf gay for himſelf, but to decore him for his holy ſervice, and to commend, as a figure of it, the perfect holineſs, wherewith our great high Prieſt *Jeſus Chriſt* was cloathed. What good thing have we, that is not from the hand of our good God, and receiving all from him, and after a Special manner Spiritual bleſſings, is it not reaſonable, that all we have (but thoſe Spiritual gifts eſpecialy) declare His praiſe, and His only. *Pſal.* 30. 1. *David* doth not grow big with vain thoughts, and lift up himſelf, becauſe God had lift him up: but *I will extol thee, becauſe thou haſt lifted me up.* The viſible heavens, and all the beauty, and the lights in them ſpeak nothing, but

His

His glory, that framed them, as the *Pſalmiſt* teacheth us, and ſhall not theſe Spiritual Lights, his *called ones*, whom he hath made Lights ſo peculiarly for that purpoſe: Theſe ſtars in his right hand, do it much more? Oh! Let it be thus with us, the more he gives, be ſtill the more humble, and let him have the return of more glory, and let it go entire to Him, 'tis all His due, and in doing thus, we ſhall ſtill grow richer, for where He ſees the faithfulleſt Servant that purloins nothing, but improves all to his Maſters advantage, ſure, him He will truſt with moſt.

And as it is thus, both moſt due to God, and moſt profitable for our ſelves, in all, to ſeek his praiſes, with our own Intereſt, ſo 'tis the moſt excellent and generous intent, to have the ſame thought with God, the ſame purpoſe that is his, and aim no lower, than at his glory: Whereas 'tis a baſe poor thing for a Man to ſeek himſelf, far below that Royall dignity, that is here put upon Chriſtians, and that Prieſthood joyned with it. Under the Law, they that were ſquint ey'd were uncapable of the Prieſthood, truely, this ſquinting out to our own intereſt, looking aſide to that (in Gods affairs eſpecially) ſo deformes the face of the ſoul, that it makes it altogether unworthy the honour of this Spiritual Prieſthood. Oh! this is a large task, an infinite task the ſeveral creatures bear their part in this, the Sun ſayes ſomewhat, and Moon, and Stars, yea, the loweſt have ſome ſhare in it, the very plants, and herbs of the field ſpeak of God, and yet the very higheſt and beſt, Yea, altogether, the whole Conſort of Heaven, and earth, cannot ſhew forth all his

praiſe

praiſe to the full. No, 'tis but a part, the ſmallaſt part of that glory, which they can reach.

We all pretend to theſe dignities, in that we profeſs our ſelves Chriſtians, but if we have a mind to be reſolv'd of the truth in this (for many, many are deceiv'd in't) we may, by asking our ſelves ſeriouſly, and anſwering truely to this. 1. Whether are my actions, and the courſe of my life ſuch, as give evidence of the grace of God, and ſo ſpeak his praiſe? if not, ſure, I am not of this number, that God thus call'd, and dignified, and this (I fear) would degrade many. 2*ly*. If my life be ſomewhat regular, and Chriſtian like, yet whether do I in it all, ſingly, and conſtantly without any ſelf, or ſiniſter end, deſire, and ſeek the glory of God alone? Otherwayes I may be like this *choſen generation*; but I am not of them: And this out of doubt, would make the number yet far leſs. Well, think on it 'its a miſerable condition for Men, either to be groſſely ſtaining and diſhonouring the holy Religion they profeſs, or in ſeeming to ſerve, and honour God to be ſerving, and ſeeking themſelves; it is the way to loſe themſelves for ever. Oh! 'its a comfortable thing to have an upright mind, and to love God for himſelf, *and love ſeeks not its own things*; they are truely happy that make this their work ſincerely, though weakly, to advance the praiſes of their God *in* all things, and finding the great imperfection of their beſt diligence in this work here, are ſtill longing to be where they ſhall do it better.

Verſe. 10.

Which in time paſt were not a People, but are now the People of God, &c.

THe love of God to his Children, is the great ſubject both of his Word, and of their thoughts, and therefore is it, that his word (the rule of their thoughts, and whole lives) ſpeaks ſo much of that love to that very end, that they may think much, and eſteem highly of it, and walk anſwerably to it. This is the Scope of St. *Pauls* Doctrine to his *Epheſians*, and the top of his deſires for them. *Eph.* 3. 17. And this is here our Apoſtles aim. As he begun with it oppoſing their Election in Heaven to their Diſperſion on Earth, the ſame conſideration runs through the whole *Epiſtle*. Here he is repreſenting to them, the great fruit of that Love, that happy, and high Eſtate, to which they are called in Chriſt, that the chuſing of Chriſt, and Believers, is as one act, and they as one entire Object of it; one glorious Temple, He the Foundation, and head corner Stone, and they the Edifice; one honourable Fraternity, He the King of Kings and great high Prieſt, and they likewiſe through him made Kings and Prieſts unto God the Father, a *Royal Prieſthood* &c. He the Light of the World, and they through him Children of Light, Now that this their Dignity, which ſhines ſo bright in its own innate worth, may yet appear the more, he ſets it off by a double oppoſition.

1. Of the misery, under which others are.

2dly. That Misery under which, they themselves were before their calling. And this being set on both sides is as a dark shadowing round about their happiness here describ'd, setting off the lustre of it.

Their former misery expres'd in the former *Verse* by Darkness, is here more fully and plainly set before their view in these words; They are borrowed from the Prophet *Hosea* 2. 23. Where (as is usual with the Prophets) he is raised up by the Spirit of God, from the temporal troubles, and deliverances of the Israelites, to consider, and foretel that great restorement wrought by Jesus Christ, purchasing a New People to himself, made up, both of Jews, and Gentiles that believe; and therefore the Prophecy is fit, and applicable to both, so that the debate is altogether needless, whether it concerns the Jews, or Gentiles: For in its Spiritual sense, as relating to the Kingdom of Christ, it foretels the making up of the Gentiles, that were not before the People of God; and of the Jews likewise, that by their Apostacies, and the Captivities, and Dispersions come upon them, as just punishments of those Apostacies, were degraded from the outward Dignities they had, as the People of God, and withal were Spiritually miserable and Captives by Nature, and so in both respects laid equal with the Gentiles, and stood in need of this Restitution, as they. St. *Paul* useth it concerning the calling of the Gentiles, *Rom.* 9. And here St. *Peter* Writing, as is most Probable, particularly to the Dispersed Jews, applies it to them as being in the very reference it bears to the Jews, truly fulfill'd in those alone, that were Believers;

Faith

Faith making them a part of the true Israel of God, to which the Promises do peculiarly belong, as the Apostle St. *Paul* argue at large, *Rom.* 9.

Their former Misery, and so their present Happiness we have here under a double expression, *they were not a People*, destitute of mercy, *not the People of God*, sayes the Prophet, *Not a People*, sayes our Apostle, being not Gods People, so base and miserable as not worthy the Name of a People at all, as 'tis taken, *Deut.* 32. 21.

There is a kind of being, a life that the Soul hath by a peculiar union with God, and therefore in that sense the Soul without God is dead, as the Body is without the Soul *Eph.* 2. 1. Yea as the Body seperated from the Soul is not only a liveless lump, but putrifies, and becomes noysome and abominable, thus the Soul seperated from God, is subject to a more loathsome and vile putrefaction, *Psal.* 14. 3. So that Men that are yet Unbelievers, *are Not*, as the *Hebrewes* express'd death, multitudes of them *are not a People*, but a heap of filthy Carcases. Again take our Natural Misery in the notion of a Captivity, which was the judgement threatned against the Jews to make them not a People, therefore their Captivity is often spoke of as a Death (by the Prophets) and their reduction as their resurrection, *Ezek.* 37. And as a Captive People is civilly dead, as they speak, so are Souls captive to Sin and the and the Prince of darkness, Spiritually dead, wanting happiness and well being which if it never attain, it had better (for it self) not be at all. Nothing but disorder and confusion in the Soul without God, the affections hurrying it tumultuously.

Thus Captive ſinners *are not, are dead*, they both want that happy being that flowes from God to the Souls that are united to himſelf, and conſequently muſt want that Society and union one with another, which reſults from the former, from the ſame union that Believers have with God and the ſame being in Him; which makes them truly worthy to be called a People, and particularly the People of God. His People are the only People in the World worthy to be call'd a People, the reſt are but refuſe and droſs; although in the Worlds eſteem, that judges by its own rules, and favour of it ſelf, the People of God be as no body, no People, a company of ſilly creatures, yea, *we are made* (ſayes the great Apoſtle) *as the filth of the World, and the offſcouring of all things*, yet in his account who hath choſen them (who alone knowes the true value of things) His People are the only People, and all the reſt of the World as *nothing* in his eyes, He Dignifies and beautifies them, and loves in them that Beauty which He hath given them.

But under that term, is not only compriz'd, that new being of Believers in each one of them apart; but that tie and union that is amongſt them as one People, being incorporated together and living under the ſame Government and Laws, without which a People are but as the Beaſts of the Field, or the Fiſhes of the Sea, and the Creeping things that have no ruler over them, as the Prophet *Habak.* ſpeaks. That regular living in Society, and Union in Laws, and Polity makes many Men to be One People, but the civil Union of Men in States and Kingdoms, is nothing comparable to the Myſterious Union of the

people

People of God with him, and one with another. That Commonwealth hath a firmer Union then all others, Believers are knit together in Christ as their Head, not merely a Civil or Political Head ruling them, but as a Natural Head enlivening them, giving them all one Life. Men in other Societies though well ordered, yet are but as a Multitude of trees regularly planted indeed, but each upon his own Root: But the Faithful are all Branches of one Root, their *Union* is so Mysterious, that it is resembled to the very union of Christ with his Father, as indeed the product of it, *Joh.* 17.

People of God] *I will say to them thou art my People, and they shall say thou art my God, Hos.* 2. 23. That Mutual Interest and possession is the very foundation of all our Comfort, He is the first Chuser, He first sayes *My People*, calls them so, and makes them to be so, and then they say *My God*, therefore a Relation that shall hold and shall not break, because it is founded upon His choyce who changes not. The tenor of an external Covenant with a People (as the Jewes particularly found) is such, as may be broken by Mans unfaithfulness, though God remain faithful and true: but the New Covenant of Grace makes all sure on all hands, and cannot be broken, the Lord not only keeping His own part, but likewise performing ours in us, and for us, and establishing us that He departs not from us first, so we shall not depart from Him. *I will betroth thee to me* (sayes he there) *for ever*, 'tis an indissoluble Marriage that is not in danger to be broke either by Divorce or Death.

My People. There is a treasure of Instruction and comfort

comfort wrapt up in that word, not only more than the profane world can imagine (for they indeed know nothing at all of it) but more than they that are of that number are able to conceive of, a deep unfoundible, *My People.* They his portion, and He theirs; He accounts nothing of all the World beside them, and they of nothing at all beside Him: For them He continues the World. Many and great are the priviledges of his people contain'd in that great Charter the Holy Scriptures, and rich is that Land where their Inheritance lies; but all is in this reciprocal, that *he is their God.* All his power and Wisdom is engag'd for their good, how great and many soever are their enemies, they may well oppose this to all, he is their God, they are sure to be protected and prosper'd and in end to have full victory. *Happy then is that People whose God is the Lord.*

which had not obtained Mercy] The Mercies of the Lord to his Chosen are from everlasting, yet so long as His Decree of mercy runs hid, and is not discover'd to them in the effects of it, they are said not to have receiv'd or obtain'd mercy, and when it begins to act and work in their effectual calling, then they find it to be theirs, it was in a secret way moving forward towards them before, as the Sun after Midnight is still coming nearer to us, though we perceive not its approach till the dawning of the Day.

Mercy] The former word teaches us how great the change is that is wrought by the Calling of God, this teaches us how free it is; *the People of God,* that's the good attained in the change, *obtain'd Mercy,* that's the Spring whence it flowes; 'tis implyed

plied indeed in the words of the change of *no People* ſuch as have no right to ſuch a Dignity at all, nor in themſelves no diſpoſition for it, to be made His people, can be by no other but free grace, ſuch mercy as ſuppoſes nothing nor ſeeks nothing but miſery in us and works upon that. As it is expreſs'd to have been very free to this people of the Jews, in chuſing them before the reſt of the World *Deut.* 17. So 'tis to the Spiritual Iſrael of God, and to every one particularly belonging to that company. Why is it that he chuſed me of a Family, and leaves another; But becauſe it pleaſeth him, he blots out their tranſgreſſions for his own Name ſake. And 2. as 'tis free mercy, 'tis *Tender mercy*, the word in the Prophet ſignifies *tenderneſs* or bowels of compaſſion, and ſuch are the mercies of our God towards us, *Jer.* 31. 20. The bowels of a Father, *Pſal.* 103. 13. and if you think not that tenderneſs enough, thoſe of a Mother, yea more than a Mother *Iſa.* 49. 15. 3. *The Rich mercy*; delights to glorifie it ſelf in the greateſt miſery. Pardons as eaſily the greateſt as the ſmalleſt of Debts. 4. *A conſtant unalterable Mercy*, a ſtream ſtill running.

Now in both theſe the Apoſtle drawes the eyes of Believers to reflect on their former miſery and view it together with their preſent Eſtate. This is very frequent in the Scriptures, *Ezek.* 16. *Eph.* 2. 1 *Cor.* 6. 11. &c. And it is of very great uſe, works the ſoul of a Chriſtian to much Humility and Love, and Thankfulneſs and Obedience.

It cannot chuſe but force him to abaſe himſelf and magnifie the free Grace and Love of God, and this may be one reaſon, why it pleaſeth the Lord to

ſuſpend

ſuſpend the Converſion of many, for many years of their life, yea, to ſuffer ſome of them to ſtain thoſe years with grievous and groſs ſins; that the riches and glory of his Grace and the freeneſs of his choyce may be the more legible both to themſelves and others. Likewiſe thoſe apprehenſions of Wrath due to ſin, and ſights of Hell as it were, that He brings ſome unto, either at or after their Converſion, make for this ſame end. That glorious Deſcription of the New *Jeruſalem*, *Revel.* 21. 16. is abundantly delighful in it ſelf, and yet the firy Lake ſpoke of their makes all that's ſpoke of the other ſound much the Sweeter.

But univerſally all the Godly have this to conſider, that they were Strangers and Enemies to God, and think whence was it that I a lump of the ſame polluted clay with thoſe that periſh, ſhould be taken and purified and moulded by the Lords own hand for a Veſſel of Glory? There is nothing here but free mercy makes the difference, and where can there be Love and Praiſes and ſervice found to anſwer this, all is to be aſcribed to the Mercy, Gifts and calling of Chriſt, and His Miniſters, as St. *Paul* 2 *Cor.* 4. 1.

But alas! we neither enjoy the comfort of this Mercy as obtain'd, nor are griev'd for wanting it, and ſtirr'd up to ſeek after it as not yet obtain'd. What do we think? Seems it a ſmall thing in your eyes to be ſhut out from the preſence of God and bear the weight of His wrath for ever? that you thus ſlight this Mercy, and let it paſs by you unregarded; or will that an imagin'd obtaining, divert you from the real purſuit of it? Will you be willingly

deceiv'd

deceiv'd? And be your own deceivers in a matter of ſo great importance? You cannot think too highly of the riches of Divine mercy, 'tis above all your thoughts, but remember and conſider this, that there is a peculiar people of His own, to whom alone all the riches of it do belong.

And therefore how great ſoever it is, unleſs you find your ſelves of that number, you cannot lay claim to the ſmalleſt ſhare of it. And you are not ignorant what is their character, what a kind of people they are, that have ſuch a knowledge of God as himſelfe gives, *they are all taught of God*, enlightned and ſanctified by his ſpirit, a holy People, as he is a holy God, ſuch as have the riches of that His grace by which they are ſaved, in moſt precious eſteem, and their hearts by it enflamed with his love; and therefore their thoughts taken up with nothing ſo much as ſtudying how they may obey and honour Him, rather chuſing to diſpleaſe all the world than offend him, and accounting nothing too dear, yea nothing good enough to doe him ſervice, if it be thus with you, then you have indeed obtain'd mercy.

But if you be ſuch as can wallow in the ſame pudle with the profane world, and take a ſhare of their ungodly wayes, or if your outward carriage be ſomewhat more ſmooth, tho you *regard iniquity in your hearts*, have your hearts ardent in the love and purſuit of the World, but frozen to God, if you have ſome boſome Idol that you hide and entertain, cannot find in your heart to part with ſome one beloved ſin, whatſoever it is, for all the love that God hath manifeſted to Man in the Son of his love *Jeſus Chriſt*, In a word if you can pleaſe and delight your

ſelf in any way diſpleaſing unto God, [though His People while they are here have ſpots, yet theſe are not the ſpots of His people that I am now ſpeaking of] I can give you no aſſurance that as yet you have obtain'd mercy, but on the contrary, 'tis certain that *the wrath of God is yet abiding on you if you continue*, and you are in apparent danger to periſh under it; you are yet Children of Spiritual darkneſs, and in the way to utter and everlaſting darkneſs. Know we what it is to be deſtitute of this mercy; 'tis a woefull eſtate, though you had all worldly enjoyments, and were in the top of outward proſperity, but ſhut out from the mercy and love of God.

There is nothing doth ſo kindly work repentance, as the right apprehenſion of the mercy and love of God, the beams of that love are more powerfull to melt the heart than all the flames of Mount *Sinai*, All the threatnings and terrours of the Law. Sin is the root of our miſery, and therefore 'tis the proper work of this mercy, to reſcue the ſoul from it, both from the guilt and the power of it at once. Can you think there is any ſuitableneſs in it, that the peculiar People of God ſhould deſpiſe his Laws, and practiſe nothing but rebellions, that thoſe in whom He hath magnified his mercy, ſhould take pleaſure in abuſing it, and that He hath waſh'd any with the blood of His Son to that end that they may ſtill tumble themſelves again in the mire; as if we were redeemed not from ſin, but to ſin: As if we ſhould ſay *we are delivered to do all theſe abominations*, as the Prophet ſpeaks. Oh Let us not dare thus to abuſe and indigmify the free grace of God, if we mean to be ſav'd by it, as many as would be found amongſt thoſe

those that obtain mercy, walk as his people whose peculiar inheritance is, His mercy: And seeing this grace of God hath appeared unto us, Let us embrace it, and let it effectually teach us to deny *ungodliness and wordly lusts.*

And if you be perswaded to be earnest suiters for this mercy and to fly in to *Jesus*, who is the *true mercy Seat*, then be assured it is yours, Let not the greatest guiltiness scar you and drive you from it: But rather drive you the more to it, the greater the weight of that misery is, under which you ly, the more is your necessity of this mercy, and the more will be the glory of it in you: 'Tis a strange kind of argument and yet a sure one, concludes well and strongly. *Psa.* 25. *Lord pardon my iniquity for it is great.* The Soul press'd with the greatness of its sin lying heavy upon it, may by that very greatness of it pressing it, presse the forgiveness of it at the hands of free mercy, 'tis for *thy name sake*, that makes it strong, the force of the inference lyes in that. Thou art nothing and worse than nothing, true; but all that ever obtain'd this mercy were once so, they were *nothing* of all that which it hath made them to be, they were *not a People*, had no interest in God, were strangers to mercy, yea, *Heirs of wrath*; yea, they had not so much as a desire after God, untill this mercy, prevented them, and shew'd it self to them, and them to themselves, and so moved them to desire it, and caus'd them to find it, caught hold on them and pluckt them out of the dungeon. And it is unquestionably still the same, and fails not ever expending, and yet never all spent, yea, not so much as at all diminish'd, flowing as the rivers from

one age to another, ſerving each age in the preſent, and yet no whit the leſs to thoſe that come after. The Lord forgiving iniquity, tranſgreſſion, and ſin to all that come unto him, and yet ſtill keeping mercy for thouſands that come after.

You that have obtain'd this mercy, and have the Seal of it within you, it will certainly conform your hearts to its own nature, it will work you to a merciſull compaſſionate temper of mind to the ſouls of others that have not yet obtain'd it, you will indeed as the Lord doth, hate ſin, but (as he doth likewiſe) you will pity the ſinner: You will be ſo far from miſconſtruing and grumbling at the long ſuffering of God, as if you would have the bridge cut becauſe you are over (as St. *Auguſtin* ſpeaks) that on the contrary, your great deſire will be, to draw others to partake of the ſame mercy with you, knowing it to be rich enough. And you will in your ſtation uſe your beſt diligence to bring in many to it, both in love to the ſouls of Men, and to the glory of God.

And withall you will be ſtill admiring and extolling this mercy as it is manifeſted unto you conſidering what it is, and what you were before it viſited you. They confeſs'd at the offering of the firſt fruits to ſet off the bounty of God. *A Syrian ready to periſh was my father*, and their Captivity in *Egypt*, far poorer; and baſer is our naturall condition, and more precious is that land of which this free mercy doth poſſeſs us.

Do but call back your thoughts, you that have indeed eſcap'd it, and look but into that pit of miſery whence the hand of the Lord hath drawn you out, and you cannot miſs to love him highly, and ſtill

kiſs

kiſs that gracious hand, even while 'tis ſcourging you with any affliction whatſoever, becauſe it hath once done this for you namely, pluckt you out of everlaſting deſtruction. As the thoughts of this change will teach us to praiſe *Pſa.* 40. 23. *He hath brought me up out of an horrible pit* then followes, *He hath put a new ſong in my mouth even praiſe unto our God*, not only *redeem'd me from deſtruction*, but withall *crown'd me with glory and honour Pſa.* 103. 4. He not only doth forgive all our debts, and lets us out of priſon; but enriches us with an eſtate that cannot be ſpent and dignifies us with a crown that cannot wither, made up of nothing of ours. Theſe two will ſtretch and Tune the heart very high, to conſider from what a low eſtate grace brings a Man, and how high it doth exalt him, in what a beggerly vile condition the Lord finds us, and yet doth not only free us thence, but puts ſuch dignities on us. *raiſes the poor out of the duſt and lifts the needy from the dunghill, that he may ſet him with Princes even with the Princes of his people.* Or as *Joſhua* the Prieſt *Zach.* 3. 3, 4. So thoſe of this Prieſthood are deale withall.

Now that we may be the deeper in the ſenſe and admiration of this mercy, it is indeed our duty to ſeek earneſtly after the evidence, and ſtrong aſſurance of it, for things work on us according to our Notice and apprehenſions of them, and therefore the more right aſſurance of mercy, the more love and thankfulneſs, and obedience ſprings from it: therefore 'tis that the Apoſtle here repreſents this great and happy change of eſtate to Chriſtians, as a thing that they may know concerning themſelves, and ought

to ſeek the knowledge of, that ſo they may be duely affected with it, a happy thing to have in the ſoul an extract of that great Archive and act of grace towards it, that hath ſtood in heaven from eternity, it is ſure both a very comfortable and profitable thing to find and read clearly the ſeal of mercy upon the ſoul which is holyneſs that by which he is mark'd by God, as a part of his peculiar poſſeſſion, that he hath choſen out of the world: And When we perceive any thing of this, let us look back, as here the Apoſtle would have us to do, how God has *called us from darkneſs, to his marvelous Light.*

Verſe. 11.

Dearly Beloved, I beſeech you as Strangers and Pilgrims, abſtain from Fleſhly Luſts which war againſt the Soul.

THe right Spiritual knowledge that a Chriſtian hath of God and of himſelf, differenceth it ſelf from whatſoever is likeſt to it, by the power and influence it hath upon the heart and life. And in this it hath the lively impreſſion of that doctrine of the holy Scriptures that teaches it. Wherein we ſtill find throughout, that the high myſteries of Religion are accompanied with practical truths, not only as agreeing with them, but as drawn out of them, and that not violently draw but naturally flowing from them, as pure ſtreams from a pure ſpring. Thus in this Epiſtle, we find the Apoſtle intermixing his divine doctrine with moſt uſeful and practical exhortations,

Chap.

Chap. 1. *Verſe*, 13. 22. And in the beginning of this *chap.* Again, and now in theſe words.

And upon this model ought both the Miniſters of the Goſpel to form their preaching, and the hearers their ear. Miniſters are not to inſtruct only, or exhort only, but to do both, to exhort Men to holineſs and the duties of a Chriſtian life, Without inſtructing men in the doctrine of faith and bringing them to Jeſus Chriſt is to build a houſe without a foundation, And on the other ſide, to inſtruct the mind in the knowledge of divine things, and neglect the preſſing of that practice and power of godlineſs that is the undivided companion of true faith, is to forget the building that ought to be rais'd upon that foundation once laid, which is likewiſe a point of very great folly. Or if Men laying that right foundation do proceed to the Superſtructure of vain and empty Speculations 'tis but *to build Hay and ſtuble* in ſtead of thoſe ſolid truths that direct the ſoul in the way to happineſs which are of more ſolidneſs and worth than Gold and Silver, and precious ſtones. 1 *Tim.* 3. 9. Chriſt and the doctrine that reveals him is called the *myſtery of the faith* and *Ver.* 16. *The myſtery of godlineſs*, as Chriſt is the object of faith, ſo he is the ſpring and fountain of godlineſs. The Apoſtle having, we ſee, in his foregoing diſcourſe unfolded the excellency of Chriſt, and of Chriſtians in Him, proceeds here to exhort them to that pure and Spiritual temper of mind and courſe of life that becomes Chriſtians.

Theſe hearers are to blame and do prejudge themſelves that are attentive only to ſuch words and diſcourſe as ſtirre the affections for the preſent, and

find

find no reliſh in the doctrine of faith, and the unfolding of thoſe myſteries that bear the whole weight of Religion, and are the ground both of all Chriſtian obedience, and all exhortations and perſuaſives to it. Theſe temporary ſudden ſtirrings of the affections, without a right informed mind, and ſome meaſure of due knowledge of God in Chriſt, do no good. 'Tis the wind of a word of exhortation that ſtirres them for the time againſt their Luſts, but the firſt wind of tentation that comes, caries them away, and thus the mind is but Toſs'd too and fro like a wave of the Sea with all kind of winds, not being *rooted and grounded in the faith of Chriſt.* As it is *Col.* 2. 7. and ſo in the love of Chriſt *Eph.* 3. 17. Which are the conquering graces that ſubdue his Luſts and the world unto a Chriſtian 1 *Joh.* 5. 4. 2 *Cor.* 5. 14. 15. Love makes a Man dead to himſelf, and the world and to live to Chriſt that died for him.

On the other part, they are no leſs, yea more to blame that are glad to have their minds inſtructed in the myſteries of the Chriſtian faith, and out of a mere natural deſire to know, are curious to hear ſuch things as inform them, but when it comes to the urging of holineſs and mortifying their Luſts, *theſe are hard ſayings*, they had rather there were ſome way to receive Chriſt, and retain their Luſts too, and bring them to agreement: To hear of the mercies of God and the dignities of his people in Chriſt is very pleaſing, but to have this follow upon it *abſtain from fleſhly Luſts*, this is an importune, troubleſome diſcourſe: But it muſt be ſo for all that, theſe that will ſhare in that mercy, and happineſs, muſt abſtain from *fleſhly luſts.* &c,

Dearly

Dearly Beloved, I beſeech you] There is a faculty of reproving required in the Miniſtry, and ſometimes a neceſſity of very ſharp Rebukes, cutting ones. They that have much of the Spirit of meekneſs, may have a rod by them too, to uſe upon neceſſity: But ſure the way of Meekneſs is that they uſe moſt willingly, as the Apoſtle there implies. And out of all queſtion with ingenuous minds, the mild way of ſweet intreaties is very forcible; as oyl that penetrates and ſinks in inſenſibly or (to uſe that known reſemblance) they prevail as the Sun beams, that without any noiſe, make the Traveller caſt his Cloak, which all the bluſtering of the Wind could not do: But made him rather gather it cloſer, and bind it faſter about him. We ſee the Apoſtles are frequent in this ſtrain of Intreaties. *I beſeech you*, *Rom.* 12. 1. Now this word of intreatie is ſtrengthned much by the other *Dearly Beloved*, ſcarce can the harſheſt Reproofs much leſs gentle Reproofs be thrown back, that have upon them the ſtamp of Love. That which is known to come from Love cannot readily but be ſo receiv'd too, and 'tis thus exprels'd, for that very purpoſe, that the requeſt may be the more welcome, *Beloved*, 'tis the advice of a Friend, one that truly loves you, and aims at nothing in it but your good, 'tis becauſe I love you that I intreat you, and intreat you as you love your ſelves *to abſtain from fleſhly luſts that war againſt your Souls*. And what is our purpoſe when we exhort you to believe and repent, but that you may be happy in the forgiveneſs of your ſins? Why do we deſire you to embrace Chriſt? but that through him ye may have everlaſting life.

However you take these things, 'tis Our Duty unceſſantly to put you in mind of them, and to do it with much love and tenderneſs of affection to your Souls, not only preſſing you by frequent warnings, and exhortings, but alſo by frequent Prayers and tears for your Salvation.

Abſtain] 'Twas a very wiſe abridgment that *Epictetus* made of Philoſophy into thoſe two words, *bear and forbear*. Theſe are truly the two main Duties that our Apoſtle recommends to his Chriſtian Brethren, as in this *Epiſtle*. 'Tis one and the ſame ſtrength of Spirit that raiſes a Man above both the troubles and pleaſures of the World, and makes him deſpiſe and trample upon both.

We have firſt briefly to explain what theſe *fleſhly luſts* mean, then to conſider the exhortation of abſtaining from them.

Unchaſt deſires are particularly called by this name indeed, but to take it for theſe only in this place, is doubtleſs too narrow. That which ſeems to be the true ſenſe of it here, takes in all undue deſires and uſe of Earthly things, and all the corrupt affections of our carnal minds.

Now in that ſenſe, theſe fleſhly luſts comprehend a great part of the body of ſin, all thoſe three the Worlds accurſed Trinity, 1 *Joh.* 2. are under this name here of *fleſhly luſts*. A crew of baſe imperious Maſters they are, to which the Natural Man is a ſlave, *ſerving divers luſts*. Some more addicted to the Service of one kind of luſt, ſome of another: But all in this unhappy, that they are Strangers, yea Enemies to God, and as the bruite Creatures, Servants to their fleſh, either beaſts of the field as covetous

with

with their eye still upon the earth, or voluptuous, swiming in pleasures as the Fishes of the Sea; or Fowls of the air in vain ambition. All the strifes that are rais'd about these things, all malice, and envyings all bitterness and evil speaking, which are works of the flesh and tend to the satisfying of its wicked desires, we are here requested to abstain from.

To abstain from these lusts is to hate and fly from the very thoughts and first motions of them, and if surpris'd by those, yet to kill them there, that they being not forth: And to suspect our selves even in those things that are not sinful, and to keep afar off from all inducements to those polluted wayes of sin.

In a word, the serving of our flesh either in things forbidden us, as unjust gain or unlawful pleasures &c. And withal from immoderate desire of, and delighting in any earthly thing, although such as is lawful, yea necessary in some degree to desire and use them, to have any feverish pressing thirst after gain, even just gain or after earthly delights though lawful is to be guilty of those fleshly lusts and a thing very unbeseeming the dignity of a Christian, they *that are cloath'd in Scarlet to embrace a Dunghil* is a strange sight; therefore the Apostle having so cleared that immediately before, hath the better reason to require this of them, that they abstain from *fleshly lusts*.

Let their own slaves serve them, you are redeem'd and deliver'd from them, a free People, yea Kings, and suits it with Royal dignity to obey vile lusts? You are Priests consecrated to God, and will you

tumble your ſelves and your precious Garments in the Mire? It was a high ſpeech of a Heathen, *that he was greater and born to greater things, than to be a ſervant to his body*; how much more ought he that's born again ſay ſo? Being born Heir to a crown that fadeth not.

Again, as the honour of a Chriſtians eſtate is far above this baſeneſs of ſerving his luſts, ſo the happineſs, and pleaſantneſs of his Eſtate, ſets him above the need of the pleaſures of ſin. He ſaid before, *if ye have taſted that the Lord is gracious, deſire the ſincere Milk of the word*, deſire that word wherein you may taſte more of his graciouſneſs, and as that fitly urgeth the appetites deſire of the word, ſo it is ſtrong to perſwade this abſtinence from fleſhly luſts, yea the diſdain and loathing of them, if you have the leaſt experience of the ſweetneſs of his love, have but taſted of the Cryſtal River of his pleaſures, the muddy pudle pleaſures of ſin will be hateful and loathſome to you; yea the beſt earthly delights that are, will be diſreliſh'd and unſavoury to your taſte. The imbittering the breaſts of the World to the Godly by afflictions, doth ſomething indeed to their weaning from them, but the breaſts of conſolation that are given them in their ſtead, weans much moreeffectually.

The true reaſon why we remain Servants to theſe Luſts, ſome to one, ſome to another, is, becauſe we are ſtill Strangers to the Love of God, and thoſe pure pleaſures that are in him; Though the Pleaſures of this Earth be poor and low, and moſt unworthy our purſuit, yet ſo long as Men know of no better, they will ſtick by thoſe they have, ſuch as they are.

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The *Philoſopher* gives this as the reaſon why Men are ſo much ſet upon ſenſual Delights, becauſe they know not the higher pleaſures that are proper to the ſoul, and they muſt have it ſome way, 'Tis too often in vain to ſpeak to Men in this, to follow them with the Apoſtles intreaty *I beſeech you abſtain from fleſhly luſts*, unleſs they that are ſpoke to, be ſuch as he ſpeaks of in the former words, ſuch as have obtained mercy and have taſted of the graciouſneſs and love of Chriſt, whoſe loves are better then Wine. Oh that we would ſeek the knowledge of this love, for ſeeking it we ſhould find it, and finding it, no force would need to pull the delights of ſin out of our hands, we would throw them away of our own accord.

Thus a Carnal mind prejudices it ſelf againſt Religion, when it hears that it requires an abſtinence from fleſhly luſts, bereaves Men of their mirth and delight in ſin: But they know not that it is to make way for more refin'd and precious delights, there is nothing of this kind taken from us, but by a very advantageous exchange, 'tis made up, *in the World ye ſhall have affliction, but in me ye ſhall have Peace.* Is not want of the Worlds peace abundantly paid with peace in him? Thus fleſhly luſts are caſt out of the hearts of Believers as Rubbiſh and traſh to make room for Spiritual comforts, we are barr'd fellowſhip with the unfruitful works of darkneſs to the end we may have fellowſhip with God and his Son Jeſus Chriſt, this is to make Men eat Angels food indeed, as was ſaid of the Manna. The ſerving of the fleſh, ſets Man below himſelf down amongſt the Beaſts, and the conſolations of

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the Spirit and Communion with God raiſes him above himſelf and aſſociates him with the Angels. But let us ſpeak to the Apoſtles own diſuaſives from theſe luſts. 1. From the Condition of Chriſtians. 2. From the Condition of thoſe luſts.

As Strangers] Theſe Diſperſed Jews were Strangers ſcatter'd in divers Countries as *Chap.* 1. *V.* 1, but here that is not intended, they are called Strangers in that Spiritual ſenſe that agrees in common to all the Saints, poſſibly in calling them thus, he alludes to their outward diſperſion, but means their Spiritual alienation from the World, and Intereſt in the *New Jeruſalem*.

And this he uſes as a very pertinent enforcement of his Exhortation. Whatſoever others do, the ſerving of the fleſh, and love of the World is moſt incongruous and unſeemly in your Perſon. Conſider what you are: If you were Citizens of this World, then you might drive the ſame trade with them, follow the ſame luſts, but ſeeing you are choſen and called out of this World, and inveſted into a new Society, made free of another City, and are therefore here but Travellers paſſing through to your Countrey? 'tis very reaſonable that there be this difference betwixt you and the World, that while they live as at home, Let your carriage be ſuch as fits Strangers, not glutting your ſelves with theſe kind of pleaſures, ſurfeiting upon their delicious fruits, as ſome unwary Travellers do abroad; but as wiſe Strangers living warily, and ſoberly, and ſtill minding moſt of all your journey homewards, ſuſpecting dangers and ſnares in your way, and ſo walking with holy fear, as the *Hebrew* word for a Stranger imports.

There

There is indeed a miſerable party even within a Chriſtian, the remainder of corruption, that is no Stranger here, and therefore keeps friendſhip and correſpondence with the World, and will readily betray him if he watch not the more: ſo that he is not only to fly the Pollutions of the World that are round about him, and to chuſe his ſteps that he be not enſnared from without, but he is to be upon a continual guard againſt the Luſts and Corruption that is yet within himſelf, to curb and control his own luſts, and give them reſolute and flat refuſals when they ſollicit him, and to ſtop up their Eſſayes and opportunities of intercourſe with the World, and ſuch things as nouriſh them, and ſo to do what he can to ſtarve them out of the holds they keep within him, and to ſtrengthen that new nature which is in him; to live and act according to it, tho ſo he ſhall be ſure to live as a Stranger here, and a deſpis'd mock'd and hated Stranger.

And 'tis not the worſe that it be ſo, if Men in Forraign Countreys be ſubject to forget their own at any time, 'tis ſure then, when they are kindlyeſt us'd abroad, and are moſt at their eaſe; and thus a Chriſtian may be in ſome danger when he is beſt accommodate, and hath moſt of the ſmiles and careſſes of the World, that though he can never wholly forget his Home that is above, yet his thoughts of it will be leſs frequent, and his deſires of it leſs earneſt, and it may be he may inſenſibly ſlide into Cuſtomes, and habitudes, as men will do that are well ſeated in ſome other Country: But by the troubles, and unfriendlineſs of the World he gains this, that when they

they abound moſt upon him, he then feels himſelf a Stranger, and remembers to behave himſelf ſo, and thinks often with much delight, and ſtrong deſires on his own Country, and the rich and ſure Inheritance that lyes there, and the eaſe and reſt he ſhall have when he comes thither.

And this will perſuade him ſtrongly to fly all polluted ways and luſts, as faſt as the World followes them; it will make him abhorr the pleaſures of ſin, and uſe the allowable injoyments of this earth warily and moderately, never engaging his heart to them as Worldlings do, but alwayes keeping that free, free from that earneſt deſire in the purſuit of worldly things, and that deep delight in the obtaining of them, which the Men of the earth beſtow upon them. There is a diligence in his Calling and prudent regard of his affairs, not only permitted to a Chriſtian, but requir'd of him; But yet in compariſon of his great and High Calling (as the *Apoſtle* calls it) he followes all his other buſineſſes with a kind of coldneſs and indifferency, as not accounting very much which way they go, his heart is elſewhere. The Traveller provides himſelf as he can of entertainment, and lodging where he comes, if it be commodious 'tis well; but if not, 'tis no great matter, if he find but neceſſaries, he can abate delicacies very well, for where he finds them in his way he neither can, nor if he could, would chuſe to ſtay there, though his Inn were dreſſed with the richeſt hangings and furniture, yet 'tis not his home, he muſt and would leave it. That's the character of ungodly Men *they mind earthly things. Phil.* 3. they are drown'd in them over head and ears as we ſay.

If

If Christians would consider how litle, and for how litle a while they are concern'd in any thing that's here, they would go through any estate, and any changes of estate, either to the better or the worse with very composed equal minds, always moderate in their necessary cares, and never taking any care at all for the flesh *to fulfill the lusts of it*.

Let them that have no better home than this world to lay claim to, live here as at home, and serve their lusts, they that have all their portion in this life, no more good to look for than what they can catch here; Let them take their time of the poor profits and pleasures that are here: But you that have your whole estate, all your riches and pleasures laid up in Heaven, and reserv'd there for you, let your hearts be there, and your conversation there, this is not the place of your rest, nor your delights, unless you would be willing to change and to have your good things here, as some foolish Travellers, that spend the estate they should live on at home in a litle whiles braving it abroad amongst strangers, will you with profane *Esau sell your birthright for a messe of pottage*? Sell eternity for a moment, and such pleasures, as a moment of them, is more worth than an eternity of the other.

It were quarrel enough against *fleshly lusts, which war against the Soul*. That they are so far below the Soul, that they cannot content, no nor at all reach the Soul, they are not a suitable, much less a satisfying good to it. Although sin hath unspeakably abus'd the Soul of Man, yet its excellent nature and original does still cause a vast disproportion betwixt it, and all those gross base things of the

earth that concern the flesh and go no further. But this is not all, these fleshly lusts are no benefit to the Soul, but they are its pernicious enemies: They war against it, and their war against it, is all made up of Stratagem and slight, for they cannot hurt the Soul, but by it self, they promise it some contentment, and so gain its consent to serve them, and undo it self, they embrace the Soul that they may strangle it. The Soul is too much diverted from its own proper business, by the inevitable and uncessant necessities of the body. And therefore 'tis exceeding injustice, and cruelty to make it likewise serve the extravagant and sinfull desires of the flesh, so much time for sleep, and so much for eating, and drinking and dressing, and undressing, and so many the greatest part of the time that remaines from these spent in labouring and providing for those. Look on the employments of most Men, all the labour of the Husband-men in the Countrey and Tradesmen in the City, the multitude of shops and callings, what are they all? But the interest and service of the body, and in all these the immortal Soul is drawn down to drudge for the mortal body, the house of clay wherein it dwells. And in the sense of this, those Souls that truely know, and consider themselves in this condition do often groan under the burden, and desire the day of their deliverance. But the *service* of the flesh in the inordinate lusts of it, is a point of far baser slavery, and indignity to the Soul, and doth not only divert it from spiritual things for the time: But habitualy indispoſes it to every Spiritual work and makes it earthly and sensual, and so unfits it for heavenly things: Where these lusts or any

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one of them have dominion the Soul cannot at all perform any good, neither pray, nor hear, nor read the word aright, And in as far as any of them prevail upon the Soul of a Child of God, they do disjoynt and disable it for holy things.

Although they be not of the grosſeſt kind of Luſts, but ſuch things as are ſcarce taken notice of in a Man, either by others or by his own conſciences ſome irregular deſires, or entanglments of the heart, *Yet theſe little Foxes will deſtroy the vines*, they will prey upon the graces of a Chriſtian, and keep them very low: Therefore it concernes us much to ſtudy our hearts, and be exact in calling to account the ſeveral affections that are in them; otherwiſe even ſuch as are called of God, and have obtain'd mercy (for ſuch the Apoſtle ſpeaks to) may have ſuch luſts within them, as will much abate the flouriſhing of their graces and the Spiritual beauty of the Soul.

The Godly know it well in their ſad experience, that their own hearts do often deceive them, harbouring and hiding ſuch things as prejudge them much of that liveline ſs of grace and comforts of the Holy Ghoſt that otherwiſe they would be very likely to attain unto.

This warring againſt the Soul, meaning the miſchief and hurtfullneſs of them, hath this under it, that theſe luſts as breaches of Gods Law do ſubject the Soul to his wrath. So that by this the Apoſtle might well urge his point. Beſides that theſe luſts are unworthy of you, the truth is, if you Chriſtians ſerve your luſts, you kill your Souls. So *Rom.* 8. 13. Conſider when Men are on their death-beds, and

near their entering eternity, what then they think of all their Moyling in the earth, and ſerving of their own hearts and luſts in any kind, when they ſee that of all theſe wayes nothing remaines to them but the guiltineſs of their ſin, and accuſations of conſcience, and the wrath of God.

Oh! that you would be perſuaded to eſteem your precious Souls, and not wound them as you do, but war for them, againſt all thoſe luſts that war againſt the Soul. The Soul of a Chriſtian is doubly precious, being beſides its natural excellency ennobled by grace, and ſo twice deſcended of heaven, and therefore deſerves better uſage than to be turn'd into a Scullion, to ſerve the fleſh. The ſervice of Jeſus Chriſt is that which only fits it, only honourable for the Soul to ſerve ſo high a Lord, and only due to ſerve Him that bought it at ſo high a rate.

Verſe. 12.

Having your Converſation honeſt among the Gentiles, that whereas they ſpeak againſt you as Evil doers, they may by your good works which they ſhall behold, glorify God in the day of viſitation.

THeſe two things that a Natural Man makes leaſt account of, are of all things in higheſt regard with a Chriſtian, his own Soul, and Gods glory. So

So that there be no ſtronger perſuaſives to him in any thing than the intereſt of theſe two, and by theſe the Apoſtle urgeth his preſent Exhortation to holineſs and blameleſneſs of life, for the ſubſtance of his advice or requeſt in this, and the former *Verſe*, is the ſame, a truely honeſt converſation, is only that which is Spiritual, not defil'd with the carnal luſts and polutions of the world.

The abſtaining from thoſe luſts doth indeed Comprehend, not only the rule of outward carriage, but the inward temper of the mind, whereas this honeſt converſation doth more expreſſely concerne our external deportment amongſt Men, as 'tis added, *honeſt among the Gentiles*. And ſo tending to the glory of God: So that theſe two are inſeparably to be regarded the inward diſpoſition of our hearts, and the outward converſation and courſe of our lives.

I ſhall ſpeak to the former firſt as the ſpring of the latter, *Keep thine heart with all diligence*. For all depends upon that *for from thence are the iſſues of Life*. *Prov.* 4. 23. And if ſo, then the regulating of the tongue, and eyes, and feet and all will follow. As there it followes, *Ver.* 24. That the impure ſtreams, may ceaſe from running, the corrupt ſpring muſt be dried up. Men may convey them cloſely to run under ground as it were, as they do vaults and ditches, *Sentinas & cloacas*; but till the heart be renewed and purg'd from baſe luſts, it will ſtill be ſending forth ſome way or other the ſtreams of iniquity, as a fountain Swelleth out, or caſteth forth her waters inceſſantly, ſo ſhe caſteth out her wickedneſs, ſayes the *Prophet*, of that very People; and City that was called holy by reaſon of the ordi-

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nances of God, and profession of the true Religion that was amongst them. And therefore tis the same *prophet's* advice from the Lord. *wash thine heart O Jerusalem how long shall thy vain thoughts lodge within thee. Jer. 4. 14.*

This is the true Method, according to our Saviours Doctrine *Make the tree good, and than the fruits will be good,* not till then: for *Who can gather grapes of thornes, or figs of Thistles.* Some good outward actions avail nothing, the Soul being unrenewed. As you may stick some figs or hang some clusters of grapes upon a thorne bush, but they cannot grow upon it.

In this Men deceive themselves, even such as have some thoughts of amendment, when they fall into sin, and are reprov'd for it, they say and possibly think so too, I will take heed to my self, I will be guilty of this no more, and because they go no deeper, they are many of them ensnared in the same kind again: But however, if they do never commit that same sin, they do but change it for some other; as a current of waters, if you stop their passage one way, they rest not till they find another. The conversation can never be uniformly, and entirely good till the fram of the heart, the affections and desires that lodge in it be changed. It is naturally an evil treasure of impure lusts and must in some kind vent, and spend what it hath within. 'Tis to begin with the wrong end of your work to rectify the outside first, to smooth the conversation, and not first of all purge the heart. Evil affections are the source of evil speeches and actions. Whence are strifes and fightings (sayes *St. James*) are they not from your lusts which war in your

your members: Unquiet unruly lusts within are the cause of the unquietnesses and contentions abroad in the world. One Man will have his corrupt will, and another his, and thus they chock and justle one another, and by the cross encounters of their purposes as flints meeting, they strike out these Sparkes that set all on fire.

So then according to the order of the Apostles Exhortation, the only true principle of all good and Christian conversation in the world, is the mortifying of all earthly, and sinfull lusts in the heart while they have possession of the heart, they do clog it and straiten it towards God and his wayes, it cannot walk constantly in them, but when the heart is freed from them 'tis enlarg'd and so (as *David* speaks) fits a Man not only to walk but *to run the way of Gods commandements*: And without this freeing of the heart a Man will be at the best very uneven, and incongruous in his ways, one step like a Christian and another like a worldling, which is an unpleasant and an unprofitable way, not according to that word *Psa.* 18. *Thou hast set my feet at hinder feet*, set them *even*, as the word is, not only swift but straight and even, and that is the thing here requir'd the whole course and revolution of a Christian's life to be like himself, and that it may be so, the whole body of sin, and all the members of it, *all the deceitful lusts, must be crucified*.

In the words there are 3. Things 1. One point of a Christians ordinary entertainment in the world *is to be evil spoken of*. 2. Their good use of that evil, *to do the better for't*. 3. The good end and certain effect of their so doing, *The glory of God*.

1. *Whereas*

1. *Whereas they ſpeak againſt you as evil doers.*] This is in the general the diſeaſe of Mans corrupt nature, and argues much the baſeneſs and depravedneſs of it, this propenſion to evil ſpeaking one of another either blotting the beſt actions with miſconſtructions, or taking doubtful things by the left ear, not chuſing the moſt favourable, but on the contrary the very harſheſt ſenſe that can be put upon them. Some Men take more pleaſure in the narrow Eying of the true and real faults of Men, and then ſpeak of them with a kind of delight. All theſe kind of evil ſpeakings are ſuch fruits as ſpring from that bitter root of pride and ſelf-love; which is naturaly deep faſtened in every Mans heart: But beſides this general bent to evil ſpeaking, there is a particular malice in the world againſt thoſe that are born of God which muſt have vent in calumnies and reproaches. If this evil ſpeaking be the hiſſing that is natural to the Serpents ſeed, ſure by reaſon of their natural antipathy it muſt be breath'd forth moſt againſt the ſeed of the Woman, thoſe that are one with Jeſus Chriſt: If the tongues of the ungodly be ſharp ſwords even to one another, they will whet them ſharper than ordinary when they are to uſe them againſt the righteous, to wound their name. The evil tongue muſt be alwayes burning, that is *ſet on fire of hell* as St. *James* ſpeaks; but againſt the Godly it will be ſure to be heated ſeven times hotter than 'tis for others. Reaſons of this are 1. Being naturaly haters of God and yet unable to reach him, what wonder if their malice act it ſelf againſt His Image in His Children, and labour to blot and ſtain that all they can with the foulſt calumnies.

2. Becauſe

2. Because they are neither able nor willing themselves to attain unto the Spotless holy life of Christians they bemire them, and would make them like themselves by false aspersions, they cannot rise to the Estate of the Godly, and therefore they endeavour to draw them down to theirs by detraction.

3. The Reproaches they cast upon the Professors of Pure Religion, they mean mainly against Religion it self, and intend them to reflect upon it.

These evil speakings of the World against pious Men professing Religion, are partly gross falshoods invented without the least ground or appearance of truth, for the World being ever credulous of evil, especially upon so deep a prejudice as it hath against the Godly, the falsest and absurdest calumnies will alwayes find so much belief as to make them odious or very suspected at least, to such as know them not; this is the Worlds Maxime, *Lye confidently, and it will alwayes do something.* As a Stone taken out of the Mire and thrown against a white Wall, tho it stick not there but rebound presently back again, yet it leaves a spot behind it.

And with those kind of evil speakings, were the Primitive Christians surcharged, even with gross and horrible falshoods, as all know that know any thing of the History of those times, even such things were reported of them, as the worst of wicked Men would scarce be guilty of. The Devil for as witty as he is, makes use again and again of his old inventions, and makes them serve in several ages, for so were the *Waldenses* accused of inhumane banquetings and beastly promiscuous uncleanness, and divers things *not once to*

be named amongst Christians, much less to be practised by them; so that it is no new thing to meet with the impurest vilest slanders as the Worlds reward of Holiness, and the practice of pure Religion.

Then again Consider, How much more will the wicked insult upon the least real blemishes that they can espy amongst the Professors of Godliness. And in this there is a threefold injury very ordinary. 1. Strictly to pry into, and maliciously to object against Christians the smallest imperfections and frailties of their Lives, as if they pretended and promis'd absolute perfection. They do indeed *exercise themselves* (such as are Christians indeed) with St. *Paul*, *to keep a good Conscience in all things towards God and Men*, they have a *regard unto all Gods Commandments*, as *David* speaks, they have a sincere love to God which makes them study the exactest obedience they can reach, and this is an imperfect kind of perfection, 'tis Evangelical, but not Angelical. 2. To impute the scandalous falls of some particular Persons to the whole number: 'Tis a very short incompetent rule, to make judgement of any one Man himself by one action, much more to measure all the rest of the same Profession by it; and they yet proceed further in this way of misjudging. 3. That they impute the personal failings of Men to their Religion, and disadvantage it by the faults of those that profess it, which as the Ancients plead well, is the greatest injustice, and such as they would not be guilty of against their own *Philosophers*. They could well distinguish betwixt their Doctrine and the manners of some of their followers,

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and thus ought they to have dealt with Christians too. Consider their Religion in it self, and the Doctrine that it teaches, and if it were vitious the blame were just, but if it taught nothing but Holiness and righteousness, then the blame of any unholiness or unrighteousness found amongst Christians was to rest upon the Persons themselves, that were guilty of it, and not to be stretch'd to the whole number of Professors, much less to the Religion that they profess: And yet this is still the custom of the World upon the least failing they can espy in the Godly, or such as seem to be so, much more with open mouth upon any gross sin in any of them.

But seeing this is the very Character of a profane mind, and the badge of the Enemies of Religion, beware of sharing at all with them in it, give not easy entertainment to the reports of profane, or of mere civil Men, against the professors of Religion, they are undoubtedly partial, and their testimony justly suspected, Lend them not a ready ear to receive their evil speakings, much less your tongue to divulge them, and set them further going: Yea, take heed that you take not pleasure in any the least kind of scoffs, against the sincerity and power of Religion. And all of you that desire your selves to walk as Christians, be very wary, that ye wrong not one another, and help not the wicked against you, by your mutual misconstructions and miscensures one of another, far be it from you to take pleasure in hearing others evil spoken of, whether unjustly, or though it be some way deservedly, yet let it be alway grievous to you, and no way plea-

ſing to hear ſuch things, much leſs to ſpeak of them It is the Devils delight to be pleas'd with evil ſpeakings, The Syrian calls him an *Akal Kartza eater of ſlanders or Calumnies.* They are a diſh that pleaſe his pallate, and Men are naturally of his Diet. In the 35. *Pſal. V. 6.* There is a word that is rendered *mockers at Feaſts, or feaſting-mockers,* that feaſted Mens ears at their meetings with ſpeaking of the faults of others ſcoffingly, and therefore ſhared with them of their cakes, or feaſts as the word is; but to a renewed Chriſtian mind, that hath a new taſte, and all new ſenſes, there is nothing more unſavoury, than to hear the defaming of others, eſpecially of ſuch as profeſs Religion, did the Law of Love poſſeſs our hearts it would regulate our Ear and Tongue, and make them moſt tender of the name of our Brethren, it would teach us the faculty of covering their infirmities, and judging favourably, taking alwayes the beſt ſide and moſt charitable ſenſe of their actions, and to blunt the fire-edge of our cenſures upon our ſelves, our own hard hearts and rebellious wills within, that they might remain no more ſharp againſt others, then is needful for their good.

And this would cut ſhort thoſe that are without, from a great deal of Proviſions of evil ſpeaking againſt Chriſtians that they many times are furniſh'd withal by themſelves, through their uncharitable carriage one towards another. However this being the hard meaſure that they alwayes find in the World, it is their wiſdom to conſider it aright, and to ſtudy that good which according to the Apoſtles advice, may be extracted out of it, and that is the ſecond thing to be ſpoken to.

2. Your

2. *Your Converſation*] As the Soveraign power of drawing good out of evil reſides in God, and argues his primitive goodneſs, ſo he teacheth his own Children ſome faculty this way, that they may reſemble Him in it, he teacheth them to draw ſweetneſs out of their bittereſt afflictions, and increaſe of inward peace from their outward troubles. And as theſe buffetings of the tongue are no ſmall part of their ſufferings, ſo they reap no ſmall benefit by them many wayes, particularly in this one, that they order their Converſation the better, and walk the more exactly for it.

And this no doubt in Divine Providence is intended and ordered for their good, and all their other trials. The ſharp cenſures and evil ſpeakings that a Chriſtian is incompaſſed withal in the World is no other but a hedge of thornes ſet on every ſide, that he go not out of his way, but keep ſtraight on in it betwixt them, not declining to the right hand nor to the left; whereas if they found nothing, but the favour and good opinion of the world, they might as in a way unhedged be ſubject to expatiate, and wander out into the Meadowes of Carnal Pleaſures that are about them, that would call and allure them, and often amuſe them from their journey.

And thus it might fall out that Chriſtians would deſerve cenſure and evil ſpeakings the more, if they did not uſually ſuffer them undeſerved. This then turnes into a great advantage to them, making them more anſwerable to thoſe two things that our Saviour joynes, to *watch* and *Pray*, to be the more vigilent over themſelves, and the more earneſt with God

God for his watching over them, and conducting of them, *Make my wayes ſtraight*, ſayes *David*, *becauſe of mine enemies*. the word is *My Obſervers*, or thoſe that ſcand my wayes every foot of them that examine them as a *Verſe*, or as a Song of Muſick, if there be but a wrong meaſure in them, they will not let it ſlip, but will be ſure to mark it.

And if they that are the Godly's enemies wait for their halting, ſhall not they themſelves ſcand them that they may not halt, and examin them to order them, as the wicked do to cenſure them, and withal depend wholly upon the Spirit of God as their guide to lead them into all truth, and to teach them how to order their Converſation aright that it may be all of one piece holy, and blameleſs and ſtill like it ſelfe.

Honeſt] Fair, or Beautiful, the ſame word doth fitly ſignifie goodneſs and beauty. For that, that is the trueſt and laſtingeſt beauty growes freſher in Old age as the *Pſalmiſt* ſpeaks of the Righteous *Pſal. 92.* as *trees planted in the houſe of God*. Could the Beauty of Vertue be ſeen, ſaid he, it would draw all to love it. A Chriſtian holy Converſation hath ſuch a beauty, as when they that are Strangers to it begin to diſcern it any thing right, they cannot chuſe but love it, and where it begets not love, yet it ſilences Calumny, or at leaſt convinces its falſhood.

The goodneſs, or beauty of a Chriſtian's Converſation conſiſting in that Symmetry and Conformity to the word of God, as its rule, he ought diligently to ſtudy that rule, and to ſquare his wayes by it, not to walk at random, but to

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apply that rule to every ſtep at home, and abroad, and to be as careful of the beauty of his wayes, to keep that unſpotted, as thoſe Women are of their faces and attire, that are moſt ſtudious of comlineſs.

But ſo far are we that call our ſelves Chriſtians from this exact regard of our Converſation, the moſt part not only have many foul ſpots, but they themſelves, and all their wayes nothing but defilement. all one ſpot, as our Apoſtle calls them, *blots are they and ſpots* 2 *Pet.* 2. 13. and even they that are Chriſtians indeed, yet not ſo watchful, and accurate in all their wayes as becomes; but ſtaining their *holy Profeſſion* either with Pride, or Coveteouſneſs, or contentions, or ſome other ſuch like uncomelineſs.

Let us therefore reſolve all, more to ſtudy this good and comely converſation the Apoſtle here exhorts to, that it may be ſuch as *becometh the Goſpel of Chriſt*, as *St. Paul* deſires his *Philippians*.

And if you live amongſt profane Perſons, that will be to you as the unbelieving Gentiles were to theſe believing Jewes, that lived amongſt them, traducers of you, and given to ſpeak evil of you, and of Religion in you, trouble not your ſelves with many apologies, and clearings, when you are evil ſpoke of, but let the tract of your life anſwer for you: your *honeſt* and *blameleſs converſation*: that will be the ſhorteſt and realeſt way of confuting all obloquies, as when one in the Schools was proving by a ſophiſtical Argument that there could be no motion; the *Philoſopher* anſwered it fully, and ſhortly by riſing up and walking. If thou would'ſt pay

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them home, this is a kind of revenge not only allowed thee, but recommended to thee, be aveng'd on evil ſpeakings, by welldoing, ſhame them from it. It was a King that ſaid, *it was Kingly to do well and be ill ſpoke of.* Well may Chriſtians acknowledge it to be true, when they conſider, that it was the lot of their King *Jeſus Chriſt*, And well may they be content, ſeeing he hath made them likewiſe *Kings*, as we heard *v.* 9.) to be conform to him in this too, this Kingly way of ſuffering to be unjuſtly evil ſpoken of, and ſtill to go on in doing the more good, alwayes aiming in ſo doing (as our Lord did) at the glory of our Heavenly Father. that is the 3*d.* thing.

That they may glorifie God] He ſayes not they ſhall praiſe or commend you, but *ſhall glorifie God.* What way ſoever this time, this *day of Viſitation* be taken, the effect it ſelfe is this, *they ſhall glorifie God*, 'tis this the *Apoſtle* ſtills holds before their eye, and that upon which a Chriſtian doth willingly ſet his eye, and keep it fixed on it, in all his wayes; he doth not teach them to be ſenſible of their own eſteem as it concerns themſelves, but only as the glory of their God is intereſs'd in it, were it not this, a generous minded Chriſtian could ſet a very light rate upon all the thoughts and ſpeeches of Men concerning him, whether good or bad, and could eaſily drown all their miſtakes in the Conſcience of the favour and approbation of his God, *'tis a ſmall thing for me to be judged of Man*, or *the day of Man*, *he that judgeth me is the Lord.* Man hath a day of judging, but it and his judgment with it ſoon paſſes away, but God hath his day, and it and his ſentence

tence abideth for ever, as the Apoſtle there adds, as if he ſhould ſay, *I appeal to God.*

But conſidering that the Religion he profeſſes, and the God whom he worſhips in that Religion are wrong'd by thoſe reproaches, and that the calumnies caſt upon Chriſtians reflect upon their Lord, this is the thing that makes him ſenſible, he feels on that ſide only, *the reproaches of them that reproach thee are fallen upon me*, ſayes the *Pſalmiſt*. And this make a Chriſtian deſirous even to Men, to vindicate his Religion, and his God, without regard to himſelf, becauſe he may ſay the reproaches of them that reproach only me have fallen upon thee.

This is his intent in the holineſs and integrity of his life, that God may be glorified, this is the Axis about which all, *this good converſation* moves, and turn s continually.

And he that forgets this, let his converſation be never ſo plauſible and ſportleſs, knows not what it is to be a Chriſtian. As they ſay of the Eagles who try their young ones whether they be of the right kind or no, by holding them before the Sun, and if they can look ſtedfaſtly upon it, they own them, if not they throw them away; this is the true evidence of an upright and real Chriſtian, to have a ſtedfaſt eye on the glory of God the father of Lights. In all, *Let God be glorified*, ſayes the Chriſtian and that ſuffices, that's the ſumme of his deſires far from glorying in himſelf, or ſeeking to raiſe himſelf, for he knows that of himſelf he is nothing, but by *the free grace of God he is what he is, whence any glorying to thee, rotteneſſe and duſt?* (ſayes, St. *Bern.*) *whence is it to thee if thou art holy? Is it not the holy*

ſpirit that hath ſanctified thee. If thou couldeſt work miracles, though they were done by thy hand, yet it were not by thy power, but by the power of God.

To the end that my glory may ſing praiſe unto thee ſayes *David Pſa.* 30. Whether his tongue, or his ſoul or both. What he calls his glory he ſhews us; and what uſe he hath for it, namely to give the Lord glory, to ſing his praiſes, and that then it was truely *Davids* glory when 'twas ſo employ'd in giving glory to him whoſe peculiar due glory is. What have we to do in the world as his creatures? Once and again his creatures, his new creatures *created unto good works*, but to exeriſe our ſelves in thoſe, and by thoſe to advance his glory; That all may return to him, from whom all is, as the rivers run back to the Sea from whence they came; *Of him and through him* and therefore, *for him are all things*, ſays the *Apoſtle*: They that ſerve baſe Gods ſeek how to advance and agrandize them. The covetous Man ſtudies to make his Mammon as great as he can all his thoughts and pains run upon that ſervice, and ſo the voluptuous and ambitious for theirs. And ſhall not they that profeſs themſelves the ſervants of the only great and the only true God have their hearts much more, at leaſt, as much poſſeſs'd with deſires of honouring and exalting him, ſhould not this be their predominant deſign and thought: What way ſhall I moſt advance the glory of my God, how ſhall I that am engaged more than they all, ſet in with the Heavens and the earth, and the other creatures to declare his excellency his greatneſs, and his goodneſs.

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In the day of Visitation] The beholding of your good works may work this in them that they may be gained to acknowledg and embrace that Religion and that God, which for the present they reject; but that it may be thus, they must be visited with that same light and grace from above which hath sanctified you. This I conceive is the sense of this word though it may be, and is taken divers other ways by Interpreters. Possibly in *this day of visitation* is implied the clearer preaching of the Gospel amongst those Gentiles, where the dispersed Jews dwell, and that when they should compare the light of that doctrine with the light of their lives, and find the agreement betwixt them, that might be helpfull to their effectual calling, and so they might glorify God: But to the end that they might do thus indeed, as with the word of God and the good works of his People there must be a particular visiting of their Souls by the Spirit of God: Your good conversation may be one good mean of their conversion; therefore this may be a motive to that: But to make it an effectual mean, this day of gracious visitation must dawn upon them. *The day spring from on high must visit them*, as it is *Luke*. 1. 78.

Verſe. 13, 14.

Submit your ſelves unto every Ordinance of man for the Lords ſake, whether it be to the King, as Supreme.

Or unto governours, as unto them that are ſent by him for the puniſhment of evil-doers, and for the praiſe of them that do well.

IT is one of the falſeſt, and yet one of the commoneſt prejudices that the world hath always entertain'd againſt true Religion, that it is an enemy to civil power, and government. The Adverſaries of the Jews charged this fault upon their City, the then Seat of the true worſhip of God. *Ezra.* 4. 15. The Jews charged it upon the preachers of Chriſtian Religion *Act.* 17. 7. As they pretended the ſame quarrel againſt Chriſt himſelf. And generally the enemies of the Chriſtians in the primitive times loaded them with the ſlander of Rebelion, and contempt of authority. Therefore our Apoſtle deſcending to partacular rules of Chriſtian life, by which it may be blameleſs, and to ſilence calumny, begins with this, not only as a thing of prime importance in it ſelf, but as particulary fit for thoſe he wrote to, being both Jews, and Chriſtians, for the clearing of themſelves and their Religion, *Submit your ſelves* &c.

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There are in the words divers particulars to be considered, all concurring to press this main duty of obedience to Magistrates, not only as well consistent with true Religion, but as indeed inseparable from it, not to parcell out the words into many pieces, they may (I conceive,) be all not unfitly compris'd under these two 1. The extent of this duty. 2. The ground of it.

First The extent 1. *To all Civil power*, of what kind soever, for the time receiv'd, and Autoris'd. There being no need of questioning, what was the rise and original of civil power either in the nature of it, or in the persons of those that are in possession of it, for if you will trace them quite through in the succession of ages, and narrowly eye their whole circle, there be few crowns in the world in which there will not to be found some crack or other more or less. If you look on those great Monarchies in *Daniel's* Vision, you see one of them built up upon the ruines of another, and all of them represented by terrible devouring beasts of monstrous shape, And whether the Romane Empire be the fourth there, as many take it, or no, yet in the things spoken of that fourth and the rest, it is inferiour to none of them, enlarging it self by conquests in all parts of the world; and under it, were the Provinces to which this Epistle is address'd; yet the Apostle enjoyn's his brethren subjection and obedience to its Authority.

Nor is it a Question so to be mov'd as to suspend, or at all abate our obedience to that which possesses in present where we live; What forme of government is most just and commodious?

God hath indeed been more express in the officers

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and government of his own houſe, his Church: But Civil Societies he hath left at liberty, in the chuſing and modelling of Civil government, though alwayes indeed overruling their choyce, and changes in that, by the ſecret hand of his wiſe and powerful providence; yet he hath ſet them no particular rule touching the frame of it, only the common rule of equity and juſtice were to be regarded, both in the contriving and managing of Government; And yet though it be ſome way defective in both, they that be ſubject to it are in all things lawful to ſubmit to its Authority, whether ſuprem or ſubordinate as we have it here expreſſely, *whether to the King as Supreme*, Namely To the *Emperour*, or to the Governours ſent *by him*, which though a Judicious Interpreter referr's to God, and will not admitt of any other ſenſe, yet it ſeem's moſt ſutable both to the words, and to the nature of the Government of thoſe Provinces to take that word *To him*, as relating to the King, for the *them that are ſent*, Anſwers to the other, *The King as Supreme*, and ſo is a very clear deſignment of the inferiour Governours of thoſe times, and places. And whatſoever was their end that ſent them, and their carriage that were ſent, that which the Apoſtle addes, expreſſes the end for which they ſhould be ſent to govern, and at which they ſhould aime in governing, as the true end of all government. And though they were not fully true to that end in their deportment, but poſſibly did many things unjuſtly, yet as God hath ordain'd authority for this end, there is alwayes ſo much juſtice in the moſt depraved government, as is a publick good, and therefore puts upon inferiours an obligation to obedience

dience, and this leads us to consider the Second thing The ground of this duty.

2 The main ground of submitting to humane authority, is the interest that divine authority hath in it, having both apponited Civil government as a common good amongst Men, and particularly commanded his people obedienceto it, as a particular good to them, and a thing very suitable with their profession it is, *for the Lords sake*. This word carries the whole weight of the duty, and is a counter balance to the former, which seem's to be therefore on purpose so expressi'd, that this may answer it. Although Civil Authority in regard of particular formes of Government, and the choyce of particular persons to govern, is but a humane ordinance or *mans creature*, as the word is; yet both the good of government, and the duty of subjection to it, is Gods ordinance, and therefore for *his sake submit your selves*.

1. God hath in general instituted Civil government for the good of humane society, and still there is good in it, tyranny is better than Anarchy. 2. 'Tis by his providence that Men are advanc'd to places of authority. *Psa.* 75. 6, 7. *Dan.* 4. 25. *John.* 19, 11. 3*ly*. 'Tis his command that obedience be yeelded to them *Rom.* 13. 1. *Tit.* 3. 1. *&c.* And the consideration of this tyes a Christian to all Loyalty and due obedience, which being still *for the Lords sake* cannot hold in any thing that's against the Lords own command, for Then Kings and Rulers, leave their station, Now the Subjection here is, *be subject* to them, as it were in your rank, still in subordination to God, but if they go out of that even

even line follow them not. They that obey the unlawfull commands of Kings do it in regard to their God no queſtion, but that their God, is their belly or their ambition, or their avarice.

But not only ought the exerciſe of authority, and ſubmiſſion to it be in things juſt, and lawful in themſelves, but the very purpoſe of the heart, both in command and obedience ſhould be *in the Lord* and *for his ſake*, this is the only ſtraight, and only ſafe rule both for Rulers, and for people to walk by. Would Kings and the other powers of the world conſider the ſupremacy and greatneſs of that King of whom they hold all their Crownes and dignities, they would be no leſs carefull of their ſubmiſſion and homage to him, than they are deſirous of their Peoples ſubmiſſion unto them.

I will not ſpeak at all of their civil obligations to their people, and the Covenant of juſtice that with good reaſon, is betwixt them in the fundamentall conſtitutions of all well ordered Kingdomes, nor meddle with that point of the dependance that Humane Authority hath upon the Societies of Men over whom it is, according to which it is here call'd Mans ordinance or creature. This is a thing that the greateſt and moſt abſolute of Princes cannot deny, that all their authority is dependent upon the great God, both as the Author of it in the generall, and the Soveraigne diſpoſer of it to particular Men, *giving the kingdomes of the earth to whom he will*, and therefore he may moſt juſtly require obedience and fealty of them, that they *ſerve the Lord in fear*, and if they rejoyce in their dignities over Men, yet do it with *trembling* in ſenſe of their duty to God, and

and that they throw down their Crowns at the feet of Christ the Lords anointed.

And to this they are the more oblig'd, considering that Religion and the Gospel of Christ doth so much press the duty of their peoples obedience to them, so that they wrong both it, and themselves very far in mistaking it, as an enemy to their authority when it doth not only, not prejudge it, but confirms it, and pleads for it. Sure they do most ingratefully requite the Lord and his Christ, When they say (as *Psal.* 2.) *Let us break their bands asunder and cast away their cords from us.* Whereas the Lord binds the cords of Kings and their Authority fast upon their People, not the cords of Tyrany indeed, to bind the Subjects as Beasts to be Sacrifices to the Passion of their Rulers, But the cords of just and due Obedience to their Kings and Governours. The Lord doth (as you see here) bind it upon all that profess his Name, and strengthens it by the respect his People carry to himself, enjoyning them, that for *his sake* they would obey their Rulers; so that Kings need not fear true Religion, that it will ever favour any thing that can be call'd Rebellion, but on the contrary still urges Loyalty, and Obedience, so that as they ought in Duty, they may in true Policy and Wisdom befriend true Religion, as a special friend to their Authority, and hate that Religion of *Rome* which is indeed Rebellion, and that *Mother of abominations*, that makes the Kings of the Earth drunk with her cup, and makes them dream of increase of Authority while they are truly on the loosing hand. But besides that they owe their Power to the advancement of Christs Kingdom

to employing themſelves, by ſtrengthening it, and doing themſelves good, they confirm their own Thrones, when they erect his, as it was ſaid of *Ceſar* that by ſetting up Pompey's Statue he ſetled and faſtened his own.

But it is an evil too natural to Men to forget the true end, and uſe of any good the Lord conferr's on them. And thus Kings and Rulers conſider not readily, for what they are exalted, think 'tis for themſelves, to honour and pleaſe themſeves, and not to honour God and benefit their People, to encourage and reward the good (as here it is) and puniſh the wicked, they are ſet on high, for the good of thoſe that are below them, that they may be refreſh'd with their light and influence, as the Lights of Heaven are ſet there in the higheſt parts of the World for the uſe and benefit of the very loweſt. God ſet them in the Firmament of Heaven, but to what end is added, *to give light upon the earth*, and the Mountains are rais'd above the reſt of the earth, (not to be places of prey and robbery, as ſometimes they are turn'd to be) but to ſend forth ſtreams from their Springs into the Valleys, and make them fertile, the Mountains and Hills, greater and leſſer Rulers, higher and lower are to ſend forth to the People the *ſtreams of Righteouſneſs and Peace*. Pſal. 72. 3.

But 'tis the corruption and miſery of Mans nature that he doth not know and can hardly be perſuaded to learn, either how to command aright, or how to obey; and no doubt many of thoſe that can ſee and blame the Injuſtice of others in Authority,

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Would be more guilty that way themſelves if they had the ſame power.

'Tis the Pride and ſelf-love of our Nature that begets diſobedience in Inferiours, and violence and injuſtice in Superiours. That depraved humour that ties to every kind of Government a propenſion to a particular diſeaſe, that makes Royalty eaſily degenerate into tyranny, and Nobles Government into faction, and popular into confuſion.

As civil Authority and ſubjection to it, is the inſtitution of God; ſo the peaceable correſpondence of thoſe two, juſt Government and due obedience is the eſpecial gift of Gods own hand, and a prime bleſſing to States and Kingdomes, and the troubling and interruption of their Courſe is one of the higheſt Publick Judgments by which the Lord puniſhes oftentimes the other ſins both of Rulers and People. And whatſoever be the cauſe and on which ſide ſoever be the juſtice of the cauſe, it cannot be look'd upon, but as a heavy Plague and the fruit of many and great provocations, when Kings and their People that ſhould be a mutual bleſſing and honour each to other are turn'd into ſcourges one to another, or into a devouring fire, as 'tis in his Parable *Jud.* 9. 20. *Fire going forth from* Abimelech, *to devour the Men of* Sechem *and fire from* Sechem *to devour* Abimelech.

Verse. 15.

For so is the will of God, that with well doing ye may put to silence the ignorance of foolish Men.

Verse 16. *As free, and not using your Liberty for a Cloak of Maliciousness: but as the servants of God.*

THis continues the same reason of the same Christian Duty, if they will obey the Lord, then they must obey Civil Powers, for that is his will, and they will not deny that their Obligation to him for they are his servants *Verse.* 16. The words indeed are more general than the former, but they relate chiefly in this place to the particular in hand, to that neither in that kind nor in any other they dishonour their profession, and abuse their Liberty, mistaking it as an exemption from those Duties to which it doth more straitly tye them, so then here the point of civil Obedience and all other good conversation amongst Men, is recommended to Christians, as conform to the will of God, and the effectualleſt clearing of their profeſſion, and very agreeable to their Christian Liberty.

The will of God] This is the ſtrongeſt and moſt binding reaſon that canbe uſ'd to a Chriſtian mind that

that hath resign'd it self to be Govern'd by that rule, to have the will of God for its Law. Whatsoever is requir'd of it upon that Warrant, it cannot refuse; although it cross a Mans own humour, or the interest of his private advantage, yet if his heart be subjected to the will of God, he will not stand with him in any thing, one word from God, *I will have it so*, silences all, and carries it against all opposition.

It were a great point if we could be perswaded to esteem duly of this, it were indeed all, it would make light and easy work in those things that go so hardly on with us, though we are daily exhorted to them Is it the will of God that I should live soberly? Then though my own corrupt will and my companions be against it, yet it must be so; wills he that I forbear Cursing and Oaths, though my custom is for it? Yet I must offer violence to my Custom, and set against the stream of all their customes that are round about me, to obey his will, who wills all things justly and holily; will he have my Charity not only Liberal in giving but in forgiving, and real and hearty in both? Will he have me Bless them that Curse me, and do good to them that hate me, and love mine Enemies? Though the World count it a hard task, and my own corrupt heart possibly find it so; yet it shall be done, and not as upon unpleasant necessity, but willingly and cheerfully, and with the more delight because 'tis difficult: For so it proves my Obedience the more, and my love to him whose will it is. Though mine Enemies deserve not my love, yet he that bids me love them does, and if he will have this the touchstone to try

try the uprightneſs of my love to him, ſhall it fail there? No, his will Commands me ſo abſolutely, and he himſelf is ſo lovely, that there can be no body ſo unlovely in themſelves, or to me, but I can love them upon his Command and for his ſake.

But that it may be thus, there muſt be a renewed frame of mind, by which a Man may renounce the World, and the Formes of it, and himſelf, and his own ſinful heart, and its way, to ſtudy and follow the only good and acceptable and perfect will of God, *Rom.*12.2. To move moſt under that line, not willingly declining to any hand, to have our whole minds, taken up in ſearching it, and our whole heart in embracing it: *Be ye not unwiſe but underſtanding, what the will of the Lord is*, ſayes the Apoſtle, *Eph.* 5. 17. Being about to exhort to particular Duties as our Apoſtle here is doing.

This is the task of a Chriſtian to underſtand his Lords will, and with a practical underſtanding, that he may walk in all well pleaſing unto God, thus the Apoſtle likewiſe exhorts the *Theſſalonians* pathetically, 1 *Ep. Chap.* 4. 1. and addes *Verſe* 3. *This is the will of God even our Sanctification.* And then proceeds particularly againſt uncleanneſs and deceit, *&c.*

Let this then be your endeavour to have your wills Crucified to whatſoever is ſinful, yea to will outward indifferent things with a kind of indifferency, the moſt things that men are ſo ſtiff in, are not worth an earneſt willing. In a word, it were the only happy and truly Spiritual temper to have our will quite rooted out, and the will of God placed in its ſtead,

ſtead, to have no other will but his, that it might conſtantly yea (ſo to ſpeak) identically follow it in all things. This is the will of God therefore it is mine.

That with well doing ye may put to ſilence the ignorance of fooliſh men.] The Duties of the ſecond Table, or well doing towards Men, are more ſenſible to Men void of Religion than theſe things that have immediate relation to God, therefore (and ſo in other *Epiſtles*) the Apoſtle is here particular in theſe for the vindicating of Religion to them that are without. Ignorance uſually is loud, and prating, making a mighty noyſe and ſo hath need of a muzle to ſilence it. They that were ready to ſpeak evil of it are called wittleſs or fooliſh Men, there was perverſeneſs in their ignorance as the Word imports. And generally all kind of Evil ſpeakings, uncharitable cenſurings doe argue a fooliſh worthleſs Mind whence they proceed, and yet they are the uſual divertiſement of the greateſt part, and takes up very much of Mens converſe, and diſcourſe, which is an evidence of the baſeneſs and perverſneſs of their minds, for whereas theſe that have moſt real goodneſs, delight moſt to obſerve what is good and commendable in others, and to paſs by their blemiſhes, 'tis the true Character of vile unworthy Perſons, as ſcurvy Flies ſit upon ſores, to skip over all the good that is in Men, and faſten upon their infirmities.

But eſpecially doth it diſcover ignorance and folly, to turn the failings of Men to the diſadvantage of Religion, none can be ſuch Enemies to it, but they that know it not, and ſee not the beauty that

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is in it. However the way to silence them we see is by *welldoing*, that silences them more than whole Volumes of Apologies. When a Christian walks unreproveably, his Enemies have no where to fasten their teeth on him; but are forc'd to gnaw their own malignant tongues, as it secures the Godly thus to stop the lying mouths of foolish Men, so it is as painful to them to be so stopt, as muzling is to Beasts, and punishes their Malice.

And this is a wise Christians way, instead of impatient fretting at the mistakes or willfull miscensures of Men, to keep still on in their calm temper of mind and upright course of life, and silent innocency, as a wind it breaks the waves into foam that Roar about it.

As free] This the Apostle addes, lest any should so far mistake the Nature of their Christian Liberty as to dream of an exemption from obedience either to God or to Men for his sake, and according to his appointment.

Their freedom he grants, but would have them understand aright, what it is. I cannot here insist at large on the Spiritual freedom of Christians, nor is it here needful, being mention'd onely for the clearing of it in this point, but free *they* are, and *they* only that are partakers of this liberty. *If the Son make you free you shall be free indeed*, the restare slaves to Satan and the World, and their own lusts, as the Israelites in *Egypt*, working in the clay, under hard taskmasters.

Much discourse and much Ink hath been spilt upon the debate of free will, but truly all the liberty it hath, till the Son and his Spirit free it, is that miserable

ſerable freedom the Apoſtle ſpeaks of *Rom. 6.* 20. *While ye were ſervants to ſin, ye were free from righteouſneſs.*

And as we are naturally ſubject to the vile drudgery of ſin, ſo we are condemn'd to the proper wages of ſin, which the Apoſtle there tells us, is *death*, according to the juſt ſentence of the Law. But our Lord Chriſt was anointed for this purpoſe to ſet us free, both to work and to publiſh liberty, to *proclaim liberty to Captives and the opening of the priſon doors to them that are bound*, having pay'd our compleat ranſome, he ſends his word as the meſſage, and his Spirit to perform it effectually to ſet us free, to let us know it, and to bring us out of priſon. He was bound and ſcourg'd as a ſlave or Malefactor to purchaſe us this liberty, therefore ought it be our ſpecial care, firſt to have part in it, and then to be like it, and ſtand faſt in it in all points.

But that we deceive not our ſelves as too many do, that have no portion in this liberty, we ought to know, that 'tis not to inordinate walking and licentiouſneſs, as our liberty, that we are call'd: But from them, as our thraldome, not called from Obedience, but to it. Therefore beware that you ſhuffle in nothing under this ſpecious name of Liberty that belongs not to it, make it not a Cloak of maliciouſneſs 'tis too precious a garment for ſo baſe an uſe. Liberty is indeed Chriſt's livery that he gives to all his followers: But the ſutable living of it is not wickedneſs, and diſobedience of any kind, but Obedience and Holineſs; you are called to be the ſervants of God, and that is your dignity and your Liberty.

The Apoſtles of this Goſpel of Liberty, gloried in this title, the *ſervants of Jeſus Chriſt*, *David* before that Pſalm of praiſe for his victories and exaltations being now ſettled on his throne, prefixes that as more honour than all theſe *a Pſalm of David the Servant of the Lord*. To Kings and Subjects and all, 'tis only happineſs to be his Subjects, 'tis the glory of the Angels to be his miniſtring Spirits. The more we attain unto the faculty of ſerving him cheerfully and diligently the more ſtill we find of this Spiritual Liberty, and have the more joy in it. As it is the moſt honourable, it is likewiſe the moſt comfortable, and moſt gainful ſervice, and they that once know it, will never change it for any other in the world. Oh that we could live as his Servants imploying all our induſtry to do him ſervice in the condition and place wherein he hath ſet us, whatſoever it is, and as faithful Servants, more careful of his affairs than of our own, accounting it our maine buſines to ſeek the advancement of his glory. *Happy is the the ſervant whom the Maſter when he cometh ſhall find ſo doing.*

Verſe.

Verſe. 17.

Honour all men. Love the Brotherhood. Fear God. Honour the King.

THis is a precious cluſter of Divine Precepts, the whole face of the Heavens is decored with ſtars But of different greatneſs, and in ſome parts they are thicker ſet then in the reſt, thus is it likewiſe in the holy Scriptures, and theſe are the two Books that the *Pſalmiſt* ſets open before us *Pſa.* 19. The Heavens as a choyce piece of the works of God inſtructing us, And the word of God more full and clear then they. Here is a conſtellation of very bright ſtars near together. Theſe words have [very briefly, and yet not obſcur'd by briefneſs, but withall very plainly] the Summe of our duty towards God and Men, to Men both in general *Honour all Men*, and in ſpecial Relations, in their Chriſtian or religious relation, *Love the Brotherhood*, and a chief civil relation *Honour the King*. And our whole duty to God compris'd under the name of *his fear*, is ſet in the middle betwixt theſe, as the common Spring of all duty to Men and of all due obſervance of it, and the Soveraigne rule by which it is to be regulated.

I ſhall ſpeak of them as they lye in the text, we need not labour about the Connexion; for in ſuch variety of brief practical directions it hath not ſuch place as in Doctrinal diſcourſes. The Apoſtle

having ſpoke of one particular, wherein he would have his brethern to clear and commend their Chriſtian profeſſion, now accumulates theſe directions as moſt neceſſary, and after goes on to particular duties of Servants &c. But firſt obſerve in general how plain, and eaſy, and how few theſe things are that are the rule of our life, no dark ſentences to puzle the underſtanding, nor large diſcouſes and long periods to burden the memory, they are all plain. There is nothing wreathed nor diſtorted in them, as wiſdom ſpeaks of her inſtructions. *Prov.* 8.

And this gives check to a double folly amongſt Men, contrary the one to the other, but both, agreeing in miſtaking and wronging the word of God. The one is of thoſe, that deſpiſe the word, and that Doctrine and Preaching that is conform to it, for its plaineſs and ſimplicity. Theſe certainly doe not take the true end for which the word is deſign'd that it is the Law of our life, and it is mainely requiſite in Lawes, that they be both brief, and clear, that it is our guide, and light to happineſs, and if that which ought to be our *Light be darkneſs, how great will that darkneſs be?*

It is true (but I am not now to inſiſt on this point) that there be dark and deep paſſages in Scripture for the exerciſe, yea for the humbling, yea for the amazing, and aſtoniſhing of the ſharpeſt-ſighted readers: But this argues much the pride and vanity of Mens minds when they buſy themſelves only in thoſe, and throw aſide altogether the moſt neceſſary, which are therefore the eaſieſt and plaineſt truths in it as in nature, theſe commodities that are of greateſt neceſſity God hath made commoneſt and eaſieſt

eaſieſt to be had, ſo in Religion, ſuch as theſe now in our hands, that are given us to live and walke by, and in the ſearch of things that are more obſcure and leſs uſeful, Men evidence that they had rather be Learned then holy, and have ſtill more mind to the *tree of knowledge*, then the *tree of life*. And in hearing of the word, they that are any whit more knowing then ordinary, are they not ſtill gaping after new motions? Something to add to the ſtock of their ſpeculative, and diſcourſing knowledge, loathing this daily manna, theſe profitable exhortations, and *requiring meat for their luſt*. There is an Intemperance of the mind as well as of the mouth, you would think it, and may be not ſpare to call it a poor cold Sermon, that were made up of ſuch plain precepts as theſe *Honour all men, Love the brother-hood, fear God honour the King*. And yet this is the Language of God, 'tis his way, this fooliſh deſpiſeable way by which he guides, and brings to Heaven them that believe.

Again we have others that are ſtill complaining of the difficulty and darkneſs of the word of God, and Divine truths, to ſay nothing of *Romes* doctrine, that talk thus, to excuſe their Sacriledge of ſtealing away the word from the people of God, a ſenſeleſs pretext, though it were true, becauſe the word is darke of it ſelf, that therefore they ſhould make it darker, locking it up under an unknowne Tongue. But we ſpeak of the common vulgar excuſe, that the groſs Ignorance and Profaneſs of many ſeeks to ſhroud under, that they are not Learned, and cannot reach the Doctrine of the Scriptures. There be deep myſteries there indeed, but what ſay you to theſe things,

things, such rules as these, *Honour all men*, &c. Are such as these ridles that you cannot know their meaning, for doe not all understand them, and all neglect them. Why set you not on to doe these? And then you should understand more. *A good understanding have all they that doe his commandments*, sayes the *Psalmist*, and as one said well, *the best way to understand the mysterious and high discourse in the beginning of St. Pauls Epistles, is to begin at the practice of these rules and precepts that are in the latter end of them*, the way to attian to know more, were to *receive the truth in the love of it* and obey that you know. The truth is, such truths as these will leave you inexcusable, even the most ignorant of you, you could not but know, you heard often that you ought to love one another, and to fear God, *&c.* And yet never apply your selves in earnest to the practice of these things, as will appear to your own consciences if they deal honestly with you in the particulars.

Honour all men.] Honour in a narrower sense is not an universal due to all, but peculiar to some kind of persons. Of this the Apostle. *Honour to whom honour*, and that in different degrees, to Parents, and Masters and other Superiours, there is an honour, that hath, as it were, *Cæsar's* image and Superscription on it; is particularly due to him, And as here it followes *Honour the King*; but there is something that goes not unfitly under the name of honour, generally due, from every Man without exception, and it consists (as all honour doth) partly in inward esteem of them, partly in outward behaviour

haviour toward them, And the former muſt be the ground, and cauſe of the latter.

We owe not the ſame meaſure of eſteem to all, we may, yea, we ought to take notice of the different outward quality, or inward Graces and gifts of Men, nor is it a fault to perceive the ſhallowneſs and weakneſs of Men with whom we converſe, and to eſteem more of thoſe on whom God hath conferr'd more of ſuch things as are truely worthy of eſteem: But unto the meaneſt we doe owe ſome meaſure of eſteem. 1. Negatively, we are not to entertain deſpiſing diſdainful thoughts of any, how worthleſs and mean ſoever, as the admiring of Men, the very beſt is a fooliſh exceſs that way, ſo the total contemning of any, the very pooreſt, is againſt this rule, for that *contemning of vile perſons*, the *Pſalmiſt* ſpeaks of, and commends, is the diſlike and hatred of their ſin, which is their vileneſs, and not to account them for outward reſpects worthy of ſuch eſteem, as their wickedneſs denudes them of. 2. We are to obſerve and reſpect the ſmalleſt good that is in any, although a Chriſtian be never ſo baſe in his outward Condition, in Body, or Mind, of very mean Intellectuals, and natural endowments; yet they that know the worth of Spiritual things, will eſteem the grace of God that is in him in the midſt of all thoſe diſadvantages, as of a Pearl in a rough ſhell. Grace carries ſtill its own worth, though under a deformed body, and ragged garments; yea, though they have but a ſmall meaſure of that neither, the very loweſt degree of Grace, as a Pearl of the leaſt ſize or a ſmall piece of Gold, yet Men will not throw't away: But as they ſay

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the leaſt ſhavings of Gold are worth the keeping. The Jews would not willingly tread upon the ſmalleſt piece of paper in their way, but took it up, for poſſibly (ſaid they) the name of God may be on it, though there was a litle Superſtion in that, yet truely there is nothing but good Religion in it, if we apply it to Men, trample not on any. There may be ſome work of grace there, that thou knoweſt not of. The name of God may be written upon that Soul thou treadeſt on, it may be a Soul that Chriſt thought ſo much of, as to give his precious blood for it, therefore diſpiſe it not, much more, I ſay, if thou canſt perceive any appearance that it is ſuch a one, oughteſt thou to eſteem whereſoever thou findeſt the leaſt trait of Chriſt's image: If thou loveſt him, thou wilt honour it; or if there be nothing of this to be found in him thou look'ſt on, yet obſerve what common gift of any kind God hath beſtowed on him, judgement, or memory, or faculty in his calling, or any ſuch thing, and theſe in their degree are to be eſteem'd, and the perſon for them. And as there is no Man ſo compleat as to have the advantage in every thing; ſo there is no Man ſo low, and unworthy, but he hath ſome thing wherein he is preferable even to theſe that in other reſpects are much more excellent; or imagine, thou canſt find nothing elſe in ſome Men, yet honour thy own nature, eſteem humanity in them, eſpecialy ſince humanity is exalted in Chriſt to be one with the deity, account of him as a Man, and with this eſteem 3dly goes that generall good will and affection due to Men. Whereas there be that doe not only outwardly expreſs, but inwardly bear more regard to ſome

Dog

Dog or Horſe that they love them to poor diſtreſſed Men, and in ſo doing doe reflect diſhonour upon themſelves and upon Mankind.

The outward behaviour wherein we owe Honour to all, is nothiug but a conformity to this inward temper of mind, for he that inwardly deſpiſeth none, but eſteemeth the good that is in the Loweſt, at leaſt that they are men, and loves them as ſuch, will accordingly uſe no outward ſign of diſdain of any, will not have a ſcorniful Eye, nor a reproachful tongue to move at any, not the meaneſt of his ſervants, nor the worſt of his Enemies; but on the contrary will acknowledge the good of every Man, and give unto all that outward reſpect that is convenient for them, and that they are capable of, and be ready to do them good as he hath opportunity and ability.

But in ſtead of walking by this rule of *honouring all Men.* What is there almoſt to be found amongſt Men, but a perverſe proneneſs to diſhonour one another, and every Man ready to diſhonour all Men, that he may honour himſelf, reckoning that what he gives to others abates of himſelf, and taking what he detracts from others as good booty to make up himſelfe. Set Mens own intereſt aſide, and that common Civility that for their own Credit they uſe one with another, and truly there will be found very little of this real reſpect to others out of their obedience to God, and love to Men, tendring their eſteem, and good Name, and their wellfare as our own: For ſo the rule is, but mutual diſeſteem and Defaming filling almoſt all Societies.

And the bitter root of this Iniquity is, that wicked accurſed ſelf love that dwells in us, every Man is naturally his own grand Idol, would be eſteem'd and honoured by any means, and to magnifie that Idol ſelfe, kills the good Name and eſteem of others in ſacrifice to it. Hence is the narrow obſerving Eye, and broad ſpeaking tongue upon any thing that tends to the diſhonour of others, and where other things fail, the diſdainful upbraiding of their Birth or Calling, or any thing that comes next to hand, that ſerves for a reproach. And hence ariſes a great part of the jarrs and ſtrifes amongſt Men, the moſt being drunk with an over weening opinion of themſelves, and the Worthleſſeſt moſt. *A fool* (ſayes *Solomon*) *is wiſer in his own conceit then ten Men that can render a reaſon*, and not finding others of their mind, this frets and troubles them, they take the ready courſe to deceive themſelves; for they look with both Eyes on the failings and defects of others, and ſcarce give their good, half an Eye, on the contrary in themſelves, they ſtudy to the full their own advantages, and their weakneſſes and defects (as he ſayes) they skip over, as Children do the hard words in their leſſon, that are troubleſome to read, and making this uneven parallel, what wonder the reſult be a groſs miſtake of themſelves. Men miſcount themſelves at home, they reckoning that they ought to be regarded, and their mind ſhould carry it, and when they come abroad, and are croſs'd in this, this puts them all out of frame.

But the humble man as he is more conform to this Divine Rule, ſo he hath more Peace by it, for he

he ſets ſo low a rate upon himſelf in his own thoughts, that 'tis ſcarce poſſible for any to go lower in judging of him, and therefore as he payes due reſpect to others to the full, and ſo gives no ground of quarrel that way, ſo he challenges no ſuch debt to himſelf, and thus avoids the uſual conteſts that ariſe in this. *Only by Pride comes contention*, ſayes *Solomon*, a Man that will walk abroad in a crowded Street cannot chuſe but be often juſtled, but he that contracts himſelf, paſſes through more eaſily.

Study therefore this excellent Grace of Humility, not the Perſonated acting of it in appearance, which may be a chief agent for Pride; but true lowlineſs of mind, to be nothing in your own Eyes, and content to be ſo in the Eyes of others; Then will you obey this Word, you will eſteem as is meet of all Men, and not to be troubled though all Men uneſteem you. As this Humility is a precious Grace, it is the preſerver of all other graces, and without it (if they could be with out it) they were but as a Box of precious Powder carried in the wind without a cover, in danger to be ſcatter'd and blown away. If you would have Honour, there's an ambition both allow'd you, and worthy of you, whoſoever you are *Rom.* 2.7. 2 *Cor.* 4. other honour, though it have the *Hebrew* Name from *weight*, is all too Light, and weighs onely with cares and troubles.

Love the Brotherhood] There is a love as we ſaid due to all included under that word of *honouring* all, but a peculiar love to our Chriſtian Brethen, which the Apoſtle *Paul* calls by a like word the *Houſhold of Faith.*

Chriſtian Brethren are united by a threefold cord

two of them common to other Men, butthe third, the ſtrongeſt, and theirs peculiarly, their Bodies deſcended of the ſame Man, and their ſouls of the ſame God, but their new life by which they are moſt entirely Brethren, is deriv'd from the ſame God-Man Jeſus Chriſt; yea in him they are all one body, receiving life from him their glorious head, who is called *the firſt born among many Brethren* and as his unſpeakable love was the ſource of this New being, and Fraternity, ſo out of queſtion it cannot but produce indiſſolluble love amongſt them that are partakers of it. The Spirit of Love and concord is that Precious Oyutment that runs down from the Head our great High Prieſt to the skirts of his Garment. The life of Chriſt, and this Law of Love is combin'd and cannot be ſever'd. Can there be enmity betwixt thoſe hearts that meet in him? Why do you pretend your ſelves Chriſtians, and yet remain not only Strangers to this Love, but moſt contrary to it, Biters and Devourers one of another, and will not be convinced of the great guiltineſs and uncomlineſs of Strifes and Envyings amongſt you, is this the badge that Chriſt hath left his Brethren, to wrangle and maligne one another? Doe you not know on the contrary that they are to be known by mutual Love? *By this ſhall all Men know that you are my Diſciples, if you love one another.* How often doth that Beloved Diſciple preſs this, he drank deep of that wellſpring of Love that was in the Breaſt on which he leaned, and (if they relate right) he died exhorting this, *Love one another.* Oh that there were more of this Love of Chriſt in our hearts, ariſing from the ſenſe of his Love to us, and

that

that would teach this Mutual Love more effectually, which the Preaching of it may ſet before us, but without that, the other cannot work it within us. Why do we ſtill hear theſe things in vain? Do we believe what the Love of Chriſt did to us, and ſuffer'd for us? And will we do nothing for him, not forgive a ſhadow, a fancy of Injurie much leſs a real one, for his ſake? And love him that wrong'd us who ever it is, but eſpecially being one of our Brethren in this Spiritual ſenſe.

Many are the Duties of this peculiar fraternal love, that mutual Converſe and admonition, and reproof, and comforting, and other Duties which are in neglect, not only amongſt formal, but even amongſt real Chriſtians. Let us intreat more of his Spirit, who is Love, and that will mend this.

Fear God] All the Rules of equity and Charity amongſt Men, flow from a higher Principle and depend upon it, and there is no right obſerving of them without due regard to that, therefore this word that expreſſes that Principle of Obedience is fitly inſerted amongſt theſe. The firſt obligement of Man being to the Soveraign Majeſty of God that made him, and all their mutual Duties one to another deriv'd from that. A Man may indeed from Moral Principles be of a mild inoffenſive Carriage, and do Civil right to all Men: But this anſwers not the Divine Rule even in theſe ſame things after the way that it requires them. The Spiritual and Religious obſervance of theſe Duties towards Men, ſprings from a reſpect to God, and terminates there too, begins and ends in him;

and

and generally all obedience to his Commands, both such as regulate our behaviour towards himselfe immediately, and such as relate to Men, doth arise from a holy fear of his Name. Therefore this fear of God upon which followes necessarily the keeping of his Commandements is given us by *Solomon* as the total Sum of Mans business and Duty, and so this way to solid happiness, 'tis *totum hominis* after he had made his discoveries of all things besides under the Sun, gone the whole circuit, and made an exact valuation, and found all to amount to nothing *but vanity and vexation of Spirit*. The account he gives of it, it was all for this purpose, to illustrate and establish this truth the more, and to make it the more acceptable, to be a repose after so much weariness, and such a tedious Journey, and so as he speaks there, *Verse.* 10. A word of delight as well as a word of truth, that the mind might sit down and quiet it self in this from the turmoyl and pursuit of vanity that keeps it busy to no purpose in all other things, but whereas there was emptiness, and vanity, that's just nothing in all other things, there was not only something to be found, but all in this one *this fear of God*, and that's *keeping of his Commandments*, which is the proper fruit of that fear. All the repeated declaring of Vanity in other things, both severally, and altogether in that Book, are but so many strokes to drive and fasten this nail as 'tis there *Verse* 11. This word of Wisdom which is the Summe of all, and contains all the rest. So *Job* after a large inquest for Wisdom searching for its Vein, as Men do for Mines of Silver and Gold, hath the return of a *Non inventum est*, from all the Creatures,

tures, *The Sea sayes it is not in me*, &c. But in the close finds it in this. *The fear of the Lord that is Wisdom, and to depart from evil that is understanding.*

Under this fear is comprehended all Religion, the inward, and outward of it, all his worship, and Service, and all the observance of His Commandements which is there *Eccles.* 12. and elsewhere expresly joyned with it, and therefore is included in it, when 'tis not express'd, so *Job.* 28. *to depart from evil that is understanding*, repeating the former words by that. So *Psal.* 111. *verse* 10. It hath in it all holiness, and Obedience, they grow all out of it. It is the beginning, and it is the top or consummation of wisdom, for the word signifies both.

Think it not then a trivial common matter to speak or hear of this Subject; but take it as our great lesson, and business here on earth, that the best proficients in it have yet need to learn it better, and that it requires our unceffant diligence and study all our dayes.

This fear hath chiefly these things. 1. A reverent esteem of the Majesty of God, which is a main fundamental thing in Religion, and that moulds the heart most powerfully to the obedience of his will. 2. A firm belief of the Purity of God, and of his power, and justice, that he loves holiness and hates all sin, and can and will punish it. 3. A right apprehension of the bitterness of his wrath and the sweet of his Love, that His incensed Anger is the most terrible and intollerable thing in the World, absolutely the fearfullest of all evils, and on the other side His

Love

Love, of all good things the best, the most blessed and delightful, yea only blessedness. Life is the Name of the sweetest good we know, and yet this *loving kindness is better then life*, saies *David*. 4. It supposes likewise Soveraign love to God for his own infinite Excellency, and goodness. 5. From all these things springs a most earnest desire to please him, and in all things, and unwillingness to offend Him in the least, and because of our danger through the multitude and strength of tentations, and our own weakness a continual self-suspition, a holy fear least we should sin, and a care and watchfulness that we sin not, and deep sorrow and speedy returning, and humbling before him, when we have sinned.

There is indeed a base kind of fear that in the usual distinction they call servile fear: But to account all fear of the Judgements and Wrath of God a Servile fear (or not to stand upon words) to account such a fear improper to the Children of God I conceive is a wide mistake. Indeed to fear the punishment of sin, without regard to God and his Justice as the inflicter of them, or to forbear to sin only because of those punishments, so as if a Man can be secur'd from those he hath no other respect to God that would make him fear to offend, this is the character of a slavish and base mind.

Again, for a Man so to apprehend wrath in relation to himself as to be still under the horrour of it in that notion, and not to apprehend Redemption and deliverance by Jesus Christ is to be under that Spirit of bondage, which the Apostle speaks of *Rom.* 8. And such fear though a Child of God

may

may for a time be under it, yet the lively actings of faith, and perſuaſion of Gods love, and the feeling of reflexe love to him in the Soul doth caſt it out, according to that of the Apoſtle 1 *Joh.* 4.18. *true love caſteth out fear.* But to apprehend the puniſhments the Lord threatens againſt ſin as certain and true, and to conſider the greatneſs and fearfulneſs of them, but eſpecially the terrour of the Lords anger, and hot diſpleaſure above all puniſhments, and (though not only, no nor chiefly for theſe) yet in contemplation of thoſe, as very great and weighty, to be affraid to offend that God who hath threatned ſuch things as the juſt reward of ſin, this I ſay is not incongruous with the eſtate of the Sons of God, yea 'tis their duty, and their property even thus to fear.

1. This is the very end for which God hath publiſh'd theſe intimations of his juſtice, and hath threatned to puniſh Men if they tranſgreſs, to the end they may fear and not tranſgreſs, So that not to look upon them thus, and to be affected with them anſwerably to their intendment were a very grievous ſin, a ſlight and diſregard put upon the words of the great God.

2. Of all others the Children of God have the righteſt, and cleareſt knowledge of God, and the deepeſt belief of his word, and therefore they cannot chuſe, but be affraid, and more afraid then all others to fall under the ſtroak of his hand. They know more of the greatneſs, and truth, and juſtice of God then others, and therefore they fear when he threatens. *My fleſh trembleth for fear of thee* (ſayes *David*) and *I am affraid of thy judgements*, yea, they tremble

when they hear the Sentence against others, or ſees the execution on them, it minds them when they ſee publick executions, and *knowing the terrour of the Lord we perſuade Men* ſayes S. *Paul* they cry out with *Moſes Pſa.* 90. *Who knowes the power of thine anger even according to thy fear ſo is thy wrath.* 'Tis not an imagination nor invention that makes Men fear more then they need, his wrath is as terrible as any that fears it moſt can apprehend, and beyond. So that this doth not only conſiſt with the eſtate of the Saints, but is their very character to tremble at the word of their Lord, the reſt neglect what he ſayes till death, and judgement ſeize on them: But the Godly know and believe that *it is a fearfull thing to fall into the hands of the living God.*

And though they have firme promiſes, and a Kingdome that cannot be ſhaken, yet they have ſtill this grace by which they ſerve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear, even in this conſideration, that our God, even he that is ours by peculiar covenant, is a *conſuming fire. Heb.* 12. 28, 29.

But indeed together with this, yea more then with theſe, they are perſwaded to fear the Lord by the ſenſe of his great love to them, and the power of that love that works in them towards him, and is wrought in them by his. *They ſhall fear the Lord and his goodneſs in the latter dayes. Hoſ.* 3. 5. In thoſe dayes his goodneſs ſhall manifeſt it ſelf more then before, the beams of his love ſhall break forth more abundantly in the dayes of the Goſpel, and ſhall beat more direct and hotter on the hearts of Men, and then they ſhall fear him more, becauſe they ſhall love him more.

This

This fear agrees well both with faith, and love, yea, they work it, compare *Pſa.* 31. 23. with *Pſa.* 34. 9. and that ſame *Pſa.* 34. *Ver.* 8. with 9. and *Pſa.* 112. *Ver.* 1. with 7. The heart touch'd with the load-ſtone of divine love trembles ſtill with this godly fear, and yet looks fixedly by faith to that ſtar of *Jacob*, Jeſus Chriſt, who guids it to the Haven of happineſs.

The looking upon God in the face of Jeſus Chriſt takes off that terrour of his countenance that drives Men from him, and in the ſmiles of his love that appear through Chriſt, there is ſuch a power as unites their hearts to him, but unites them ſo, as to fear his name, as the *Pſalmiſt's* prayer is. He puts ſuch a fear in their hearts as will not cauſe them depart from, yea, cauſes that they *ſhall not depart from him.*

And this is the pureſt and higheſt kind of godly fear that ſprings from love, and though it excludes not the conſideration of wrath, as terrible in it ſelf, and ſome fear of it, yet it may ſurmount it, and doubtleſs where much of that love poſſeſſes the heart, it will ſometimes drown the other conſideration, that it ſhall ſcarcely be ſenſible at all, and will conſtantly ſet it aſide, and perſuade a Man purely for the goodneſs and lovelineſs of God to fear to offend him, though there were no intereſt at all in it of a Mans own perſonal miſery or happineſs.

But do we thus fear the Lord our God? What mean then our oaths, and exceſſes, and uncleanneſs? our covetouſneſs, and generally our unholy and unchriſtian converſation? This fear would make Men tremble ſo as to ſhake them out of their

profane cuſtomes, and to ſhake their beloved ſins out of their boſomes, the knowledge of the holy one, cauſes fear of him *Prov.* 9. 18.

But alas! We know him not, and therefore we fear him not, knew we but a little of the great Majeſty of God, how holy he is, and how powerful a puniſher of unholineſs, we would not dare to provoke him thus, he that *can kill both body and ſoul, and caſt them into hell* (as our Saviour tells us) and he will do ſo with both, if we will not fear him, becauſe he can do ſo and 'tis told us that we may fear, and ſo not feel this heavy wrath. A little lively ſpiritual knowledge would go far, and work much, that a great deal, ſuch as ours is, doth not. Some ſuch word as that of *Joſeph* would do much, being engraven on the heart, *ſhall I do this evil, and ſin againſt God?* it would make a man be at no more liberty to ſin, in ſecret then in publick, no not to diſpenſe with the ſin of his thoughts more then of openeſt words or actions. If ſome grave wiſeman did ſee our ſecret behaviour, and our thoughts, would we not look more narrowly to them? And not ſuffer ſuch rovings and follies in our ſelves, ſure therefore we forget Gods eye, which we could not, if we thought right on't, but reſpect more, then if all men did ſee within us.

Nor is this only the main point to be preſs'd upon the ungodly, but the Children of God themſelves have much need to be put in mind of it, and to increaſe in it, how often do they abuſe the indulgence of ſo loving a father, and have not their thoughts ſo conſtantly full of him, are not in his fear (as *Solomon* adviſes) *all the day long*, but many times

times ſlip out of his directing hand, and wander from him, and do not ſo deeply fear his diſpleaſure, and ſo watch over all their wayes as becomes them, and keep cloſe by him, and wait on his voyce, and obey it conſtantly, and are not ſo humbled and afflicted in their repentings for ſin as this fear requires, but ſlight and ſuperficial. They offer much lip-labour which is but dead ſervice to the living God. Theſe are things, My beloved, that concernes us much, and that we ought ſeriouſly to lay to heart, for even they that are freed from condemnation, yet if they will walk fearleſly and careleſly at any time, he hath ways enough to make them ſmart for't, and if there were no more, ſhould it not wound them deeply, to think how they requite ſo great, ſo unſpeakable love.

Honour the King,] This was the particular that the Apoſtle preſs'd, and inſiſted on before, and here repeats, as a ſpecial duty of the Second Table, and a vindication of Religion wrongfully blamed in this point, but of this before.

This is out of queſtion in the generall, only in the meaſure and rule of it, is the difference, and ſure they cannot poſſibly be ſatisfied that are ſo drunk with power, as to admit of none at all, no meaſure nor rate for it, no banks nor channel for thoſe rivers the hearts and wills of Kings to run in, but if they like to run over all, they may.

This is ſuch a wilde conceit as deſtroyes both all law of reaſon in humane ſocieties, and all religious obligement to the Laws of God. For the qualification and meaſure, I ſhall mention no other, but that in the Text, that it be always regulated by this, that here

here goesb efore it, *the fear of God*, that we never think of any such obedience, and honour due to Kings as crosseth *that fear* that is due to God, Let Kings, and Subjects, and all know, that they are absolutely bound to this, 'tis spoke to Kings *Psa. 2. serve the Lord in fear.* and *Psa. 9. 6.* to all men *fear before him all the earth, for he is great and greatly to be praised, He is to be feared above all Gods.* What is Man in respect of him? Shall a worm whose breath is in his nostrils stand in competition with the everliving God? Shall an Earthen potsheard strive with his maker? *Let the potsheards strive with the potsheards of the earth,* Let them work one against another and try which is hardest, and so they shall often break each other, but *woe to him that striveth with his maker.* There's nothing there, but certain perishing. As we conlude in the question with *Rome* of the honour due to Saints, and Angels, honour let them have good reason, but not Divine Honour, not Gods peculiar, so in this, give to *Cæsar* the things that are *Cæsars* but withal still give to God the things that are Gods.

But 'tis a miserable estate of a Kingdom when debates arises, and increases in this, and their happiness is, when Kings, and People concurre to honour God: *For those that honour him, he will honour.* And whosoever despises him shall be despised.

Verse.

Verſe. 18.

Servants be Subject to your Maſters with all fear not only to the good and gentle: But alſo to the froward.

Thy word (ſayes the Pſalmiſt) *is a light to my feet, and a Lanterne to my paths*, not only a light to pleaſe his eyes, by the excellent truths and comforts that are in it, but withall a light to direct his feet in the precepts and rules of life that it gives, to inform and delight his mind to order his courſe. That Philoſopher was deſervedly commended, that drew knowledge moſt this way, and therefore was ſaid to have brought Philoſophy from the clouds to dwell amongſt Men, calling it from empty Speculations to a practicall ſtrain. Thus we are taught in Spiritual knowledge by the word of God. The Son, the eternal word, which he came to dwel with Men, and ſo brought life, and wiſdom, and all bleſſings from the Heavens down unto them, he taught them both by his doctrine, and perfect example how to walk, and his Apoſtles do conformably aim at this in their holy writings, joyning with the myſteries of faith, thoſe rules of life, that ſhow men the ſtraight way to happineſs.

And as it is ſpoken of the largneſs of *Solomons* wiſdom, that *He ſpoke of all Trees, from the Cedar in Lebanon, to the Hyſſope that growes out of the wall:*

So

So in this, we may ſee the perfection of the Holy Scriptures, that they give thoſe directions that are needful to all ranks and ſorts of Men, they ſpeak not only of the duties of Kings, how they ought to behave themſelves on their thrones, and the duty of their ſubjects to them in that dignity, and how Miniſters, and others ought to carry in the Houſe of God; but they come in to private houſes, and give *œconomick* rules for them, teaching Parents, and Children, and Maſters, yea and Servants how to acquit themſelves one to another, Thus here *Servants be ſubject to your Maſters.*

As this is a juſt plea for all the people of God, that they have right to the uſe of this book, being ſo uſefull for all ſorts, and that they ought not to be barr'd it, ſo it is a juſt plea againſt a great part of thoſe that barre themſelves the uſe of it, through ſloathfulneſs and earthly-mindedneſs, ſeeing it is ſo contemper'd, that there be many things, yea, all the main things in it profitable for all: Fitted to the uſe of the loweſt eſtate, and loweſt capacities of Men, yea, it takes (as we ſee) particular notice of their condition, ſtoops down to take the meaneſt Servant by the hand, to lead them the way to Heaven; and not only that part of it which is the general way of Chriſtians, but even thoſe ſteps of it, that lye within the walk of their particular calling, as here, teaching not only the duties of a Chriſtian but of a *Chriſtian Servant.*

Obſ. 1. The Scriptures are a deep that few can wade far into, and none can wade through (as thoſe *Ezek.* 47. But yet all may come to the brook and refreſh themſelves with drinking of the ſtreams of its

its living Water, and go in a litle way according to their ſtrength and ſtature; now this (I ſay) may be ſpoken to our ſhame, and I wiſh it might ſhame you to amendment, that ſo many of you, either uſe not the Scriptues at all, or in uſing, do not uſe them, turn over the leaves, and it may be run through the lines, and conſider not what they adviſe you, Maſters learn your part, and Servants too hearken what they ſay to you, for they paſs not you by, they vouchſafe to ſpeak to you too: But you vouchſafe not to hear them, and obſerve their voyce. How can you think that the reading of this Book concerns you not? When you may hear it addreſs ſuch particular directions unto you. Wiſdom goes not only to the gates of Pallaces, but to the common gates of the Cities, and to the publick highwayes, and calls to the ſimpleſt that ſhe may make them wiſe. Beſides that you diſhonour God, you prejudge your ſelves; for does not that neglect of God and his Words juſtly procure the diſorder and diſobedience of your Servants towards you, as a fit puniſhment from his righteous hand; although they are unrighteous, and are procuring further judgment to themſelves in ſo doing; and not only thus, is your neglect of the Word a cauſe of your trouble by the juſtice of God, but in regard of the Nature of the Word, that if you would reſpect it, and make uſe of it in your Houſes, it would teach your Servants to reſpect and obey you as here, you ſee it ſpeaks for you, and therefore you wrong both it, and your ſelves when you ſilence it in your Families

Obſ. 2. The Apoſtle having ſpoken of ſubjecti-

on to publick Authority, addes this of ſubjection to private Domeſtick Authority, 'tisa thing much of concernment, the right ordering of Families, for all other Societies Civil, and Religious, are made up of theſe. Villages, and Cities, and Churches, and Commonwealths, and Kingdomes are but a Collection of Families, and therefore ſuch as theſe are, for the moſt part, ſuch muſt the whole Societies predominantly be, one particular Houſe is but a very ſmall part of a Kingdom, yet the wickedneſs and lewdneſs of that Houſe, be it but of the meaneſt in it, of Servants one or more, though it ſeem but a ſmall thing, yet goes in to make up that heap of ſin that provokes the wrath of God, and drawes on publick Calamity.

And this particularly when it declines into diſorder proves a publick evil, when Servants grow generally corrupt and diſobedient, and unfaithful; though they be the loweſt part; yet the whole Body of a Commonwealth cannot but feel very much the evil of it, as a Man does when his Legs and feet grow diſeaſ'd, and begin to fail him.

We have here, 1. Their Duty. 2. The due extent of it. 3 The right Principle of it.

Be ſubject] 1. Keep your Order and Station under your Maſters, and that with fear, and inward reverence of mind and reſpect to them, that is the very Life of all Obedience. Then their Obedience hath in it diligent doing, and patient ſuffering. Both theſe are in that word, *be ſubject*, do faithfully to your utmoſt that which is concredited to you, and obey all their juſt Commands, for Action indeed goes no further, but ſuffer patiently even their unjuſt Rigours and

ſeverities

ſeverities. And this being the harder part of the two, and yet a part that the Servants of thoſe times bore, many of them being more hardly and ſlaviſhly us'd than any with us, eſpecially thoſe that were Chriſtian Servants under unchriſtian Maſters; therefore the Apoſtle inſiſts moſt on this, and this is the extent of the Obedience here requir'd, that it be to all kind of Maſters, not to the good only, but the evil, not only to obey, but to ſuffer, and ſuffer patiently, and not only deſerv'd, but even wrongful and unjuſt puniſhment.

Now becauſe this particular concerns Servants, Let them reflect upon their own carriage, and examine it by this Rule, and truly the greateſt part of them will be found very unconform to it, being either cloſely fraudulent, and deceitful; or groſly ſtubborn, and diſobedient, abuſing the lenity and mildneſs of their Maſters, or murmuring at their juſt ſeverity, ſo far are they from the patient endurance of the leaſt undue word of reproof, much leſs of ſharper puniſhment, either truly, or in their opinion undeſerv'd. And truly if any that profeſs Religion diſpence themſelves in this, thy miſtake the matter very much; for it tyes them more, whether Children or Servants to be moſt ſubmiſſive and obedient even to the worſt kind of Parents and Maſters, *always in the Lord*, not obeying any unjuſt Command, though they may and ought to ſuffer patiently (as it is here) their unjuſt reproofes or puniſhments.

But on the other ſide, this does not juſtify, nor at all excuſe the unmerciful Auſteritie, and unbridled Paſſion of Maſters, 'tis ſtill a perverſneſs and crookedneſs in them, as the word is here, and muſt

have its own Name, and ſhall have its proper reward from the Soveraign Maſter and Lord of all the World.

2. There is here alſo the due extent of this Duty, Namely, *to the Froward.* 'Tis a more deformed thing to have a diſtorted crooked mind, or a froward ſpirit, than any crookedneſs of the Body. How can he that hath Servants under him expect their Obedience, when he cannot command his own Paſſion, but is a ſlave to it? And unleſs much Conſcience of Duty poſſeſs Servants (more than is readily to be found with them) it cannot but work a Maſter into much diſaffection and diſeſteem with them, when he is of a turbulent Spirit, a *troubler of his own Houſe*, embittering his affairs, and Commands, with rigidneſs and Paſſions, and taking things readily by that ſide that may offend, and trouble him, thinking his Servant ſlights his call, when he may as well think he heard him not, and upon every light occaſion, real or imagin'd, flying out into reproachful ſpeeches, or proud threats, contrary to the Apoſtle St. *Pauls* rule; which he ſets over againſt the Duty of Servants, *Eph. 6. Forbearing threatning, knowing that your Maſter alſo is in Heaven, and that there is no reſpect of Perſons with him*: think therefore, when you ſhall appear before the Judgment Seat of God that your carriage ſhall be examin'd, and judg'd as theirs, and think that we regard thoſe differences much of Maſters and Servants, but they are nothing with God, they evaniſh.

Conſider who made thee to differ, might he not have made your Stations juſt contrary with a turn of his hand, and made thee the Servant, and thy

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Servant the Master: But we willingly forget those things that should compose our minds to humility, and meekness, and blow them up with such fancies as please, and feed our natural vanity, and make us some body in our own account.

However that Christian Servant that falls into the hands of a froward Master, will not be beaten out of his Station, and Duty of Obedience by all the hard and wrongful usage he meets withal; but will take that as an opportunity of exercising the more Obedience, and Patience, and will be the more cheerfully Patient, because of his Innocency, as the Apostle here exhorts.

Men do indeed look sometimes upon this, as a just plea for impatience, that they suffer unjustly, which yet is very ill Logick: for (as he said) would any Man that frets because he suffers unjusty, wish to deserve it, that he might be patient. Now to hear them, they seem to speak so, when they exclaim, that the thing which vexeth them most, is, that they have not deserv'd any such thing as is inflicted on them: truly desert of punishment may make a Man more silent upon it, but innocency right considered makes him more Patient, guiltiness stops a Mans mouth indeed in suffering: But sure it doth not quiet his mind, on the contrary, it is that which mainly disturbs and grieves him, 'tis the sting of suffering, as sin is said to be of Death; and therefore when that is not, the pain of the sufferings cannot but be much abated by it; Yea the Apostle here declares, that to suffer undeservedly, and withal patiently, is glorious to a Man, and acceptable to God. It is commendable indeed to be truly patient

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even in deserved sufferings, but the deserving them tarnishes the lustre of that Patience, and makes it look more constrain'd like, which is the Apostles meaning, preferring it much before spotless suffering, and that is indeed the true glory of it, that it pleaseth God, so that it is render'd in the close of the 20. *Verse* for the other word of glory in the beginning of it, 'tis a pleasing thing in Gods eyes, and therefore he will thank a Man for it, as the word is, though we owe all our Patience under all kind of afflictions as a Duty to him, and though that Grace is his own gift; yet he hath oblig'd himself by his Royal Word, not only to accept of it, but to praise it, and reward it in his Children; though they lose their thanks at the World's hands, and be rather scoff'd and taunted in all their doings, and sufferings, 'tis no matter, they can expect no other there, but their reward is on high, in the sure and faithful hand of their Lord.

How often do Men work earnestly, and do and suffer much for the uncertain wages of glory, and thanks, amongst Men, and how many of them fall short of their reckoning, either dying before they come through to that State where they think to find it, or find it not where they look'd for't, and so do but live to feel the pain of their disappointment; Or if they do attain their end, such glory and thanks as Men have to give them, what amounts it to? Is it any other but a handful of nothing, the breath of their mouths, and themselves much like it, a vapour dying out in the air, and the realest thanks they give, their solidest rewards, are but such as a Man cannot take home with him, if they go so far with him,

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yet at furtheſt he muſt leave them at the door, when he is to enter his Everlaſting home. All the Riches and Pallaces, and Monuments of honour that he had, and that are erected to him after death, as if he had then ſome intereſt in them, reach him not at all, enjoy them who will, he does not, *he hath no Portion of all that is done under the Sun*, his own end is to him the end of the World.

But he that would have abiding glory, and thanks, muſt turn his eye another way for them. All Men deſire Glory, but they know neither what it is, nor how 'tis to be ſought, he is upon the only right bargain of this kind, *whoſe Praiſe* (according to *St. Pauls* word) *is not of Men but of God.* If Men commend him not, he accounts it no loſs, nor no gain if they do, for he minds for a Country where that coyn goes not, and whither he cannot carry it; and therefore he gathers it not. That which he ſeeks in all, is, that he may be approv'd, and accepted of God, whoſe thanks is no leſs to the leaſt of thoſe he accepts, than a crown of unfading Glory; not a poor Servant that fears his Name and is Obedient, and Patient for his ſake, but ſhall be ſo rewarded.

There be ſome kind of Graces, and good actions that Men (ſuch as regard any grace) take ſpecial notice of, and commend highly, ſuch as are of a magnifick and remarkable nature, ſuch as Martyrdome, or doing, or ſuffering for Religion in ſome Publick way: There be again other obſcure Graces, that if Men deſpiſe not, yet they eſteem not much, as Meekneſs, and Gentleneſs, and Patience under private croſſes known to few or

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none, and yet theſe are of great account with God, and therefore ſhould be ſo with us, they are of more univerſal uſe: whereas the other, are but for high times, as we ſay, for rare occaſions, theſe are every ones work, but few are call'd to the acting of the other. And the leaſt of them ſhall not loſe their reward, in whoſe Perſon ſoever, as St. *Paul* tells us, ſpeaking of this ſame ſubject, *Eph.* 6. 8. *Knowing that whatſoever good thing any Man doeth, the ſame ſhall he receive of the Lord, whither he be bound or free.*

This is the bounty of that great Maſter we ſerve: For what are we, and all we can do, that there ſhould be a Name of a reward to it; yet he keeps all in reckoning, not a poor lame Prayer, not a Tear, nor a ſigh poured forth before him ſhall go to loſs. Not any croſs from his own hand immediatly, or comming through Mens hands, that is taken (what way ſoever it come) as out of his hand and carried patiently, yea and wellcom'd, and embrac'd for his ſake, But he obſerves our ſo entertaining of it, not an injury that the meaneſt Servant bears Chriſtianly, but goes all upon account with him, and he ſets them ſo, as that they bear much value through his eſteem, and way of reckoning them, though in themſelves they are all leſs than nothing, as a worthleſs Counter, ſtands for hundreds or thouſands according to the Place you ſet it in. Happy they that have to deal with ſuch a Lord, and be they Servant or Maſter, are vow'd Servants to him, *When he comes his reward ſhall be with him.*

The 3*d.* thing is *the Principle of this Obedience and Patience, for Conſcience towards God.*

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It imports 1. The knowledge of God, and of his will in some due measure. 2. A conscientious respect unto him and his will so known, taking it for their only rule in doing and suffering.

1. This declares to us the freeness of the grace of God in regard of Mens outward quality, that he doth often bestow the riches of his grace upon Persons of mean condition. 'Tis suppos'd here, that this conscience of God, the saving knowledge and fear of his name, is to be found in Servants: Therfore the Apostle takes them within the address of his Letter amongst those that are *elect, according to the foreknowledge of God, Chap.* 1. *Ver.* 2. And sharers of those dignities he mentions *Ver.* 9. of this *Chap. A chosen generation.* The honour of a Spiritual Royalty, under the meanness of a Servant, and this grace possibly conferr'd upon the Servant, and denied to the Master, as here suppos'd: It may fall out that a perverse crooked-minded Master may have a Servant uprightly minded, being endowed with a tender respective conscience towards God, and thus the Lord does to counteract the pride of Man, and set off the lustre of his own free grace, he hath all to chuse on, and yet chuses there, where Men would least imagine. *Matt.* 11. 25. 1 *Cor.* 1. 27.

2. Grace finds a way to act it self in every estate where it is, and regulates the Soul to the particular duties of that estate, if it find a Man high or low, a Master, or a Servant, it requires not a change of his station, but works a change on his heart, and teaches him how to live in it, the same Spirit that makes a Christian Master pious, and gentle, and prudent in commanding, makes a Christian Servant faith-

full and obsequious, and diligent in obeying. A skillful engraver makes you a Statue indifferently of Wood, or Stone, or Marble, as they are put into his hand, and grace formes a Man to a Christian way of walking in any estate, there is a way for him in the meanest condition to glorifie God, and to adorn the profession of Religion, no estate so low, as to be shut out from that, and a right inform'd, and right affected conscience towards God shews a Man that way, and causes him to walk in it. As the Astrologers say, that the same Stars that made *Cyrus* to be chosen King amongst the Armies of Men when he came to be a Man, made him to be chosen King amongst the Shepherds Children when he was a Child: Thus grace will have its proper operation in every estate.

In this Men readily deceive themselves, they can do any thing well in imagination, better than the real task that is in their hands. They presume that they could do God good service in some place of command, that serve him not as becomes in that which is by far the easier, the place of obeying, wherein he hath set them, They think if they had the ability and opportunities that some Men have, they would do much more for Religion, and for God than they do, and yet do nothing but spoile a far lower part than that, which is their own, and is given them to study and act aright in; but our folly, and self ignorance abuses us, 'tis not our part to chuse what we should be, but to be what we are to to his glory, that gives us to be such: Be thy condition never so mean, yet thy conscience towards God, if it be within thee, will find it self work in that. If

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it be litle that is concredited to thee in regard of thy outward condition, or any other way, *be thou faithfull in that litle*, as our Saviour ſpeaks, and thy reward ſhall not be litle, *he ſhall make thee ruler over much.*

3. As a corrupt mind debaſeth the beſt and excellenteſt Callings, and Actions, ſo the loweſt are rais'd above themſelves, and ennobl'd by a Spiritual mind. A Magiſtrate or Miniſter though their calling and employments be high, may have low intentions, and draw down their high calling to theſe low intentions; they may ſeek themſelves, and ſelf ends, and neglect God. And a ſincere Chriſtian may elevate his low Calling by this Conſcience of God obſerving his will, and intending his Glory in it. An Eagle may fly high, and yet have its eye down upon ſome carrion on the earth, and a Man may be ſtanding on the earth, and that on ſome low part of it, and yet have his eye upon Heaven and be contemplating it. That which one Man cannot at all ſee in another, is the very thing moſt conſiderable in their actions, namely, the principle whence they flow, and the end to which they tend. This is the form and life of actions, that by which they are earthly, or Heavenly. Whatſoever be the matter of them, the Spiritual mind hath that Alchimy indeed of turning baſe Metals into Gold, Earthly employments into Heavenly. The handy work of an Artiſan or Servant that regards God, and eyes him, even in that work, is much holier than the prayer of an Hypocrite, and a Servants enduring the private wrongs and harſhneſs of a froword Maſter, bearing it patiently for the Conſci-

ence of God, is more acceptable to God, than the sufferings of some such, as may endure much for a publick good cause without a good and upright heart.

This habitude and posture of the heart towards God, the Apostle *S. Paul* presses much in this very Subject *Eph. 6.* as being very needful to allay the hard labour, and harsh usage of many of them, this is the way to make them easy, to undergo them for God, no pill so bitter, but respect and love to God will sweeten it. And this is a very great refreshment and comfort to a Christian in the mean estate of a Servant, or other labouring Men, that they may offer up their hardship and bodily labour as a sacrifice to God, and say, Lord, this is the station wherein thou hast set me in the world, and I desire to serve thee in it, what I do is for thee, and what I suffer I desire to bear patiently and cheerfully for thy sake, in submission and obedience to thy will.

For Conscience] In this there is 1. A reverent complyance with Gods disposal, both in allotting to them that condition of Life, and particularly chusing their Master for them, though possibly not the mildest and pleasantest, yet the fittest for their good, there is much in the firm believing of this, and hearty submitting to it: For we would naturally rather carve for our selves, and shape our own estate to our mind, which is a most foolish, yea, an impious presumption, as if we were wiser than he that hath done it, and as if there were not as much, and it may be more possibility of true contentment in a mean than in a far higher condition, the Masters mind is often more toyl'd than the Servants body. And if

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our condition be appointed us, at least we would have a voyce in some qualifications and circumstances of it, as in this, if a Man must serve, he would wish willingly, that God would allot him a meek gentle Master, and so we in other things; if we must be sick, we would be well accommodated, and not want helps, but to have sickness, and want means, and friends for our help, this we can not think of without horror. But this submission to God is never right till all be given up into his hand that concernes us, to do with it and every Article and circumstance of it as seems good in his eyes. 2. In this Conscience is a Religious and observant respect to the rule God hath set men to walk by in that condition, so that their obedience depends not upon any external inducements, and so falls when that fails: But flows from an inward impression of the Law of God upon the heart, thus a Servant's obedience, and patience will not be pinn'd to the goodness and equity of his Master, but when that failes, will subsist upon its own inward ground, and generally in all estates. This is the thing that makes sure, and constant walking, makes a Man step even in the ways of God. When a Mans obedience Springs from that unfailing, unchanging reason, the command of God, 'tis a natural motion, and therefore keeps on, and rather growes, than abates; but they that are moved by things outward, must often fail; because these things are not constant in their moving; as a People that are much acted by the Spirit of their rulers, as the Jews when they had good *Kings*. 3. In this is a tender care of the glory of God, and the adornment of

Religion

Religion, which the Apostle premis'd before these particular duties, as a thing to be specially regarded in them; the honour of our Lords name is that we should set up, as the mark, and to aim all our actions at, either we think not on it, or our hearts slip out, and start from their aim, *like bowes of deceit* as the Word is. 4. There is the comfortable perswasion of Gods approbation and acceptance, as is expressid in the following *Verse* (of which somewhat before) and the hope of that reward he hath promis'd, as it is *Col.* 3. 24. No less than the inheritance, so then such Servants as these, are Sons and Heirs of God, *Co-heirs with Christ*, thus he that is a Servant, may be in a far more excellent estate than his Master: The Servant may hope for, and aim at a Kingdome, while the Master is embracing a dunghill, and he that is thus, thinks highly of Gods free grace: And the looking ever to that inheritance, makes them go cheerfully through all pains and troubles here as light and momentany, and not worth the naming in comparison of that glory that shall be revealed. In the mean time the best and most easy condition of the Sons of God cannot satisfy them, nor stay their sighs and groanes, waiting, and longing for that day of their full redemption.

Now this is the great rule, not only for Servants. But for all the Servants of God in what estate soever, to set the Lord alwayes before them, and to study (with St. *Paul*) *to have a conscience void of offence towards God and Men*, to eye and apply constantly to their actions, and their inward thoughts the command of God, to walk by that rule abroad,

and

and at home, in their houſes, and in the ſeveral ways of their calling: As an exact workman is ever, and anon laying to his rule to his work, and ſquaring it, and for the Conſcience they have towards God, to do and ſuffer his will cheerfully, in every thing, being content, that he chuſe their condition, and their trials for them. Only desirous to be aſſur'd, that he hath choſen them for his own, and given them right to the *glorious Liberty of the Sons of God*, ſtill endeavouring to walk in that way that leads to it, overlooking this moment, and all things in it, accounting it a very indifferent matter what is their outward eſtate here in this moment, providing they may be happy in Eternity; high or low here, bond or free, it imports little; ſeeing all theſe differences will be ſo quickly at an end, and there ſhall not be ſo much as any tract or footſtep of them left with particular Men: 'Tis ſo in their graves, you may diſtinguiſh the greater from the leſs by their Tombs, but by their duſt you cannot, and with the whole world it ſhall be ſo in end. All Monuments, and Palaces, with cottages made fire, as our Apoſtle tells us, the *elements ſhall melt with fervent heat, and the earth and all the works therein ſhall be burnt up.*

Verſe.

Verſe. 21. 22, 23.

For even hereunto were ye called: Becauſe Chriſt alſo ſuffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye ſhould follow his ſteps.

22. *Who did no ſinne, neither was guile found in his mouth,*

23. *Who when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he ſuffered, he threatned not: But committed himſelf to him that judgeth righteouſly.*

THe rules that God hath ſet Men to live by are univerſally juſt, and there is an univerſall obligation upon all Men to obey them, but as they are particulary addreſs'd to his own people in his word, they are out of queſtion particularly bound to yeild obedience, and have many peculiar perſwaſives to it, that extend not to others, which are therefore uſually repreſented to them, and preſs'd upon them in the Holy Scriptures. Thus the preface of the Law runs to *Iſrael*, beſides that, *I am Jehovah* and have Supreme power to give Men Laws, is added *I am thy God* eſpecially thy deliverer from ſlavery, and bondage, and ſo have a peculiar right to thy obedience, ſo *Deut.* 7. 6. Thus the Apoſtle

Apoſtle here urgeth this point in hand of inoffenſiveneſs, and patience, particularly in Chriſtian Servants: But ſo as it fits every Chriſtian in his ſtation, for *hereunto*, ſayes he, *ye are called*. Whatſoever others do, though they think this too ſtrait a rule, yet you are tyed to it by your own calling, and profeſſion as you are Chriſtians; and this is evidently the higheſt and cleareſt reaſon that can be, and of greateſt power with a Chriſtian, Namely, the example of Jeſus Chriſt himſelf. *For Chriſt alſo ſuffered for us, &c.*

So 'tis all but one entire Argument, that they ought thus to behave themſelves, becauſe 'tis the very thing they are called to, as their conformity to Jeſus Chriſt, whoſe they profeſs to be, yea, with whom as Chriſtians they profeſs themſelves to be one.

Hereunto were ye called] This in the general is a thing that ought to be ever before our eye, to conſider the nature, and end of our calling, and to endeavour in all things to ſuit it, to think in every occurrence, what doth the calling of a Chriſtian require of me in this; but the truth is, the moſt do not mind this, we profeſs our ſelves to be Chriſtians, and never think what kind of behaviour this obliges us to, and what manner of perſons it becomes us to be *in all holy Converſation*; but walk diſorderly out of our rank inordinately, you that are Prophane, were you called by the Goſpel to ſerve the World, and your Luſts, to Swearing and Rioting, and Voluptuouſneſs? Heare you not the Apoſtle teſtifying the contrary, in expreſs termes? That *God hath not called us to uncleanneſs, but unto holineſs*. You that are of proud contentious Spirits, are you ſuitable to

this holy Calling? No, for *we are called to Peace*, saves the same Apostle, but we study not this Holy Calling, and therefore we walk so incongruously, so unlike the Gospel, *we lie and do not the truth*, as St. John speaks, our Actions belie us.

The particular that here Christians are said to be called to, is *to sufferings*, as their Lot; and *Patience*, as their Duty, even under the most unjust and undeserved sufferings.

And not these are as large as the Sphere of this Calling, not only Servants and others of a mean condition, that lying low, are the more subject to rigours and injuries, but generally, all that are called to Godliness are likewise called to Sufferings. 2 *Tim.* 3. 12. All that will follow Christ, must do it in his Livery, they must take up their Cross. This is a very harsh and unpleasing Article of the Gospel to a carnal mind, but it conceales it not. Men are not led blindfold upon sufferings, and drawn into a hidden snare by the Gospels invitations, they are told very often, that they pretend not a surprisal, nor have any just plea for starting back again, as our Saviour tells his Disciples, why he was so express and plain with them in this, *These things* saves he, *have I told you that you be not offended*, I have shew'd you the ruggedness of your way, that you stumble not at it, takeing it to be a smooth plain one, but withal where this is spoke of, 'tis usually allay'd with the mention of those comforts, that accompany these sufferings, or that glory that followes them. The Doctrine of the Apostles which was so verified in their own Persons, *Act.* 14. *That through much tribulation we must enter into the Kingdom of*

God,

God, an unpleasant way indeed, if you look no further, but a Kingdom at the end of it, and the Kingdom of God will transfuse pleasure into the painfullest step in it all, so *Psal.* 34. 19. It seems a sad condition that falls to the share of Godly men in the World, to be eminent in sorrowes and troubles. *Many are the afflictions of the Righteous*, but that which followes weighs it abundantly down in consolation, that the Lord himselfe is engaged in their afflictions, both for their deliverance out of them in due time, and in the mean time, their support and preservation under them. *The Lord delivers them out of them all.* And till he does that, he *keepeth all their bones*, &c. Which was literally verified in the Natural body of Christ, as St. *John* observes, and holds Spiritually true in his mystical body. The Lord supports the Spirits of Believers in their troubles with such solid consolations, as are the Pillars and strength of their Souls, as the bones are of their Body, as the *Hebrew* word for them imports, so *he keepeth all his bones*; and the desperate condition of wicked men is oppos'd to illustrate this *Verse* 21. *But evil shall slay the Wicked.*

Thus *Joh.* 16. 33. In the closure they are forewarned what to expect at the Worlds hands, as they were divers times before in that same Sermon: but it is a sweet Testament, take it altogether, *Ye shall have tribulation in the world, but Peace in me*, and seeing he hath joyntly bequeathed these two to his followers, were it not great folly to cast such a bargain? And so let go that Peace for fear of this trouble, the trouble is but in the World, but the Peace is in him who weighs down thousands of Worlds.

So then they do exceedingly miſtake, and miſreckon themſelves, that would agree Chriſt, and the World: that would have the Church of Chriſt, or at leaſt, themſelves for their own ſhares, enjoy both kinds of peace together, would willingly have Peace in Chriſt, but are very loath to part with the Worlds Peace, they would be Chriſtians, but they are very ill ſatisfied when they hear of any other but eaſe and Proſperity in that eſtate, and willingly forget the tenor of the Goſpel in this; and ſo when times of trouble and ſufferings come, their minds are as new and uncouth to it, as if they had not been told on't before hand. They like better of St. *Peters* carnal advice to Chriſt to avoid ſuffering, *Mat.* 16. than of his Apoſtles Doctrine to Chriſtians, teaching them that as he ſuffered, ſo they likewiſe are called to ſuffering. Men readily think as he did there, that Chriſt ſhould favour himſelf more in his own body, his Church, than to expoſe it to ſo much ſuffering; and moſt would be of *Rome's* mind in this, at leaſt in affection, that the badge of the Church ſhould be Pomp and Proſperity, and not the Croſs, the true croſs of Afflictions and ſufferings is too heavy and painful.

But Gods thoughts are not ours, thoſe he calls to a Kingdome, he calls to ſufferings, as the way to it: He will have the heirs of Heaven know they are not at home on earth, and that this is not their reſt, he will not have them with the abus'd World fancy a happineſs here, and ſeek life, as St. *Auguſtin* ſayes *beatam vitam quærere in regione mortis.* The reproaches and wrongs that encounter them ſhall elevate their minds often to that Land of Peace and reſt

rest, *where righteousness dwells*. The hard Taskmasters shall make them weary of *Egypt*, which otherwise possibly they would comply too well with, and dispose them for deliverance, and make it welcome, which it may be they might but coldly desire if they were better us'd.

He knowes what he does, that secretly serves his good ends of Mens evil, and by the Plowers that make long furrowes on the back of his Church makes it a fruitful Field to himself. Therefore 'tis great folly and unadvisednes, to take up prejudice against his way, and think it might be better as we would model it, and to complain of the order of things; whereas we should complain of disordered minds, but we had rather have all alter'd, and chang'd for us, the very course of Providence, than seek the change of our own perverse hearts, but the right temper of a Christian is, to run alwayes cross to the corrupt stream of the World, and humane iniquity, and to be willingly carried along with the stream of divine Providence, and not at all to stir a hand, no not a thought, to row against that mighty current; and not only to be carryed with it upon necessity, because there is no steering against it, but chearfully, and voluntarily, not because he must, but because he would.

And this is the other thing to which they are joyntly called, as to suffering so to calmnes of mind, and patience in suffering; although their suffering be most unjust, yea, this is truly a part of that Duty they are called to, to that integrity and innocensiveness of Life, that may make their sufferings at Mens hands alwayes unjust to the entire Duty here is Innocency,

nocency, and Patience, doing willingly so wrong and yet cheerfully suffering it done to them; if either of the two be wanting, their suffering doth not credit their Profession, but dishonours it; if they be patient under deserved suffering, their guiltiness darkens their Patience; and if their suffering be undeserved, yea, and the cause of them honourable, yet impatience under them staines both their sufferings, and their cause, and seems in part to justify the very injustice that is us'd against them: but where innocency and Patience meet together in suffering, there sufferings are in their perfect lustre. These are they that honour Religion, and shame the enemies of it. It was the concurrence of these two that was the very triumph of the Martyrs in times of Persecution that tormented their Tormentors and made them *more then Conquerors* even in sufferings.

Now that we are called both to suffering, and to this manner of suffering, the Apostle puts out of question, by the Supream example of our Lord Jesus Christ, for the Sum of our Calling is, *to follow him.* Now in both these, in suffering, and in suffering Innocently and Patiently, the whole History of the Gospel testifies how compleat a Pattern he is. And the Apostle gives us here a Summary, yet a very clear account of it.

The Words have in them these two things. 1. The perfection of this Example, 2. Our obligation to follow it.

I. The example he sets off to the full. 1. In regard of the greatness of his sufferings. 2. Of his spotlessness and Patience in suffering.

The first we have in that word *he suffered,* and after

after *Verse* 24. We have his crucifying, and his stripes expresly specified.

Now this is reason enough and carries it beyond all other reason, why Christians are call'd to a suffering Life, seeing the Lord and Author of that Calling suffer'd himself so much. The Captain or Leader of our salvation, as the Apostle speaks, was *consecrate by suffering*, that was the way by which he entred into the holy place where he is now our everlasting High Priest, making intercession for us, if he be our Leader to Salvation, must we not follow him in the way he leads whatsoever it is, if it be (as we see 'tis) by the way of sufferings, we must either follow on in that way, or fall short of salvation, for there is no other Leader nor other way, but that which he open'd up, so that there is not only a Congruity in it, that his followers be conform to him in suffering, but a necessity, if they will follow him on, till they attain to Glory, and the consideration of both these cannot but argue a Christian into a Resolution for this *via regia* this Royal way of suffering that leads to Glory, through which their King, and Lord himself went to his Glory. It could hardly be believ'd at first, that this was his way, and we can as hardly yet believe that it must be ours. *Luk.* 24. *O fools and slow of heart to believe, ought not Christ to have suffer'd these things, and so to enter into his glory.*

Would you be at glory, and will you not follow your Leader in the only way to it? Must there another way be cut out for you by your selfe? O abfur'd! *shall the servant* (sayes he) *be greater than his Master.* Are you not fairly dealt with if you

have

have a mind to Christ? You shall have full as much of the Worlds good will as he had, if it hate you he bids you remember, *how it hated him.*

But though there were a way to do otherwayes would you not rather chuse (if the love of Christ possess'd your hearts) to take a share with him in his Lot, and find delight in the very trouble of it, is not this conformity to Jesus, the great ambition of all his true hearted followers. *We carry about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus,* sayes the great Apostle, besides the unspeakable advantage to come, that goes link'd with this, that *if we suffer with him, we shall reign with him*; there is a glory, even in this present resemblance that we are conformed to the Image of the Son of God in sufferings. Why should we desire to leave him? Are you not one with him? Can you chuse but have the same common friends and enemies? Would you willingly, if it might be, could you find in your heart to be friends with that World, that hated your Lord and Master? Would you have nothing but kindness and ease? where he had nothing but enmity and trouble, or would you not rather, when you think right on't, disdain and refuse to be so unlike him? As that good Duke said, when they would have Crown'd him King of *Jerusalem*, *No*, said he, *by no means, I will not wear a Crown of Gold, where Jesus was Crown'd with thornes.*

3. This Spotlesness and Patience in suffering are both of them set here before us, the one *Verse* 22. the other 23.

Whosoever 'tis that makes such a noise of the injustice of what he suffers, and thinks to justify his impatience

Impatience by his Innocency, let me ask thee, art thou more just and innocent then he that is here set before thee? Or art thou able to come near Him in this Point? *Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth.* This is to signify perfect holiness, according to that *James.* 3. 2. Man a little world, a world of wickedness, and that little part of him a little world of Iniquity. all Christs words, and actions, and all his thoughts flow'd from a pure Spring that had not any thing defiled in it, and therefore no tentation either from Men, or Satan could seize on him, other Men may seem clear unstirr'd, but move and trouble them, and the mudd arises, but he was nothing but holiness, a pure fountain, all purity to the bottom, and therefore stirr and trouble him as they would he was still alike clear. *The Prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in me.*

This is the main ground of our confidence in him, that he is *a Holy Harmeless undefil'd high priest,* and *such an one became us,* sayes the Apostle, that are so sinfull, the more sinfull we, the more need that our High Priest should be sinlesse, and being so, we may build upon his perfection, standing in our stead, yea, we are invested with him and his righteousness.

Again *there was no guile found in his mouth,* this serves us concerning all the promises that he hath made us, that they are nothing but truth, hath he said? *Him that comes to me I will in no wise cast out,* then you need not fear, how unworthy and vile soever, do you but come to him, and you have his word that he will not shut the door against you, and as he hath promis'd access, so hath he further pro-

mis'd eaſe, and Souls reſt to thoſe that come; then be confident to find that in him too, for there was never a falſe nor guileſull word found in his mouth.

But to conſider it only in the preſent action, this ſpeaks him the moſt innocent ſufferer that ever was, not only judicially juſt in his cauſe, but entirly juſt in his Perſon, altogether righteous, and yet condemn'd to death, and an opprobrious death of Malefactours, and ſet betwixt two, as chief of the three, *I am* (ſayes he) *the roſe* Sharon *and the Lillie of the valley*. And the Spouſe ſaith of him *My wel-beloved is White and ruddy*, thus indeed in his death, ruddy in his blood-ſhed, and white in his innocency, and withal in his meekneſs and patience, the other thing wherein he is here ſo exemplary.

Verſe, 23. *Who when he was reviled, reviled not again*] This ſpotleſs Lamb of God was a Lamb both in guiltleſneſs, and ſilence, and the Prophet *Eſay* expreſſes the reſemblance in that, *he was brought as a Lamb to the ſlaughter*, he ſuffer'd, not only an unjuſt Sentence of death but withall, unjuſt revilings, *the contradictions of ſinners*, none ever did ſo litle deſerve revilings, none ever could have ſaid ſo much in his own juſt defence, and to the juſt reproach of his enemies, and yet in both, he preferr'd ſilence: None could ever threaten ſo heavy things as he could againſt his enemies, and have made good all he threatned, and yet no ſuch thing was heard from him. The heaven and earth as it were ſpoke their reſentment of his death that made them: But he was ſilent, or what he ſpoke makes this ſtill good, how far he was from revilings, and threatnings. As

ſpices

ſpices pounded, or precious ointment poured out give their ſmell moſt, thus his name was an ointment then poured forth, together with his blood, and fill'd Heaven and Earth with its ſweet perfume, was a ſavour of reſt and peace in both, appeaſing the wrath of God, and ſo quieting the Conſciences of Men, and even in this particular was it then moſt fragrant, in that all the Torments of the croſs and revilings of the multitude, that as it were rack't him for ſome anſwer, yet could draw no other from him but this, *father forgive them for they know not what they do.*

But for thoſe to whom this mercy belong'd not, the Apoſtle tells us what he did in ſtead of Revilings and Threatnings, *he committed all to him that judgeth righteouſly.* And this is the true method of Chriſtian patience, that which quiets the mind, and keeps it from the boyling Tumultuous thoughts of revenge, to turne the whole matter into Gods hand, to reſign it over to him, to proſecute when, and as he thinks good. Not as the moſt, that had rather, if they had power, do for themſelves, and be their own avengers, and becauſe they have not power do offer up ſuch bitter curſes, and prayers for revenge unto God, as are moſt hateful to him, and are far from this calm and holy way of committing matters to his judgment. The common way of referring things to God is indeed impious, and diſhonourable to him, being really no other, but a calling of him to be a Servant, and executioner to our paſſion, We ordinarily miſtake his juſtice, and judge of it according to our own precipitant diſtemper'd minds. If wicked Men be not croſs'd in their deſignes

ſignes, and their wickedneſs evidently crush'd juſt when we would have it, we are ready to give up the matter as deſperate, or at leaſt abate of thoſe confident, and reverent thoughts of divine juſtice that we owe him: Howſoever things go, this ought to be fixed in our hearts, that he that ſits in Heaven judgeth righteouſly, and executes that his righteous judgement in the fitteſt ſeaſon, We poor wormes whoſe whole life is, but an hand-breadth in it ſelf, and is as nothing unto God, we think a few months, or years, a great matter, but to him that inhabites Eternity, *a thouſand years are but as one day*, as our Apoſtle teaches us.

Our Saviour in that time of his Humiliation and Suffering, committed himſelf and his cauſe, for that is beſt expreſs'd, in that nothing is expreſs'd but *he committed*, and the iſſue ſhall be that *all his enemies ſhall become his footſtool*, and he himſelf ſhall judge them: But that which is given us here to learn from his carriage toward them in his Suffering, is that quietneſs and moderation of mind even under unjuſt Sufferings make us like him. Not to reply reproach with reproach as our cuſtom is, to give an ill word for another, or two for one, to be ſure not to be behind, Men take a pride in this, and think it ridiculous ſimplicity to ſuffer, and this make ſtrifes and contention ſo abound, but 'tis a great miſtake, you think it greatneſs of ſpirit to bear nothing, to put up no wrong: Whereas it is indeed great weakneſs, and baſeneſs, 'tis true greatneſs of Spirit to deſpiſe the moſt of thoſe things that ſet you uſually on fire one againſt another, eſpecially being done after a Chriſtian manner, 'twere a part of the Spirit of Chriſt in you, and is there

any

any Spirit greater than that think you? Oh! that there were leſs of the Spirit of the Dragon, and more of that Spirit of the Dove amongſt us.

Our obligement to the example of Chriſt, beſides its own excellency, is in theſe two things in the words 1. The intendment of his behaviour for this uſe, to be as an example to us. 2. Our Intereſt in him, and thoſe his Sufferings, wherein he ſo carried himſelf.

Leaving us an Example &c. He left his footſteps as a Copy (as the word is) to follow, every ſtep of his, a letter of this Copy, and particularly in this point of Suffering, he writ us a pure and perfect Copy of obedience in clear and great letters in his own blood.

His whole life is our Rule, not his Miraculous works, his footſteps walking on the Sea, and ſuch like, are not for our following: But his obedience and Holineſs, and Meekenſs, and Humility are our Copy, which we ſhould continualy ſtudy. The ſhorter and more effectual way (they ſay) of teaching, is by example, but above all, this matchleſs example is the happieſt way of teaching, *He that followes me* ſayes he, *ſhall not walk in darkneſs.*

He that aimes high, ſhoot's the higher for't, though he ſhoot not ſo high, as he aimes. This is that which ennobles the Spirit of a Chriſtian the propounding of this our high Patterne, the example of Jeſus Chriſt.

The Imitation of Men in worthleſs things is low and ſervile, the Imitation of their vertues is commendable, but if we ſeek no higher, 'tis both imperfect and unſafe. The Apoſtle St. *Paul* will have no Imitation, but with regard to this Supreme patterne,

Patterne, *be ye followers of me, as I am of Christ*, One Christian may take the example of Christ in many things in another, but still examining all by the Original primitive Copy, the footsteps of Christ himself, following nothing, but as it conformes with that, and looking most on him, as both the perfectest and most effectual example. *Heb.* 12. 2. there is *a cloud of witnesses* and examples, but look above them all to him, that is as high above them, as the Sun is above the clouds. As the way is better, a lively one indeed, so there is this advantage in the Covenant of grace, that we are not left to our own skill for following of it, but taught by the Spirit: In the delivery of the Law, God shewed his glory and greatness by the manner of it, but the Law was written only in dead Tables, but Christ, the living Law, teaches by obeying it, how to obey it, and this is the advantage of the Gospel, that the Law is Twice written over unto believers, first in the example of Christ, and then inwardly in their hearts by his Spirit. There is together with that Copy of all grace in him, a Spirit deriv'd from him, enabling believers to follow him in their measure, they may not only see him as *the only begotten Son of God full of grace and truth*, as it is *Jo.* 6. But as there it followes, *they receive of his fulness grace for grace.* The love of Christ makes the Soul delight to converse with him, and converse, and Love together, makes it learn his behaviour, as Men that live much together, especially if they do much affect one another, will insensibly contract anothers habitudes, and customes.

The other thing obliging us, is our interest in him, and his Sufferings, he suffer'd for us, and this the

Apostle

Apoſtle returnes to *Ver.* 24. Obſerve only from the Tye of theſe two, that if we neglect his example ſet before us, we cannot enjoy any right aſſurance of his ſuffering for us, but if we do ſeriouſly endeavour to follow him, then we may be perſwaded of life through his death, and thoſe ſteps of his wherein we walk will bring us ere long to be where he is.

Verſe. 24.

Who his own ſelf bare our ſins in his own Body on the Tree, that we being dead to ſin, ſhould live unto Righteouſneſs; by whoſe ſtripes ye were healed.

THat which is deepeſt in the heart, is readily moſt in the mouth. That which abounds within, runs over moſt by the Tongue or Pen, when Men light upon the ſpeaking of that Subject, that poſſeſſes the affection, they can hardly be taken off, or drawn from it again. Thus the Apoſtles in their writings, when they make mention any way of Chriſt ſuffering for us, they love to dwell on it, as that which they take moſt delight to ſpeak of: Such delicacy and ſweetneſs is in it to a ſpiritual taſte, that they like to keep it in their mouth, and are never out of their theam when they inſiſt on Jeſus Chriſt, though they have but nam'd him by occaſion

ſion of ſome other Doctrine, for he is the great ſubject of all they have to ſay.

Thus here, the Apoſtle had ſpoke of Chriſt in the foregoing words very fitly to this preſent Subject, ſetting him before Chriſtian Servants and all ſuffering Chriſtians, as their compleat example, both in point of much ſuffering, and of perfect Innocency, and Patience in ſuffering. And expreſs'd their engagement to ſtudy and follow that example; yet he cannot leave it ſo, but having ſaid, that all thoſe his ſufferings wherein he was ſo exemplary, were for us, as a chief conſideration, for which we ſhould ſtudy to be like him, he returns to that again, and enlarges himſelf in it in words partly the ſame, partly very near thoſe of that Evangeliſt among the Prophets *Eſay Chap.* 53.

And it ſuits very well with his main ſcope, to preſs this point; as giving both very much ſtrength and ſweetneſs to the Exhortation, as being moſt reaſonable, that we willingly conform to him in ſuffering that had never been an Example of ſuffering, nor ſubject at all to ſufferings nor capable of them but for us; and moſt comfortable in the light ſufferings of this Moment, to conſider, that he hath freed us from the ſufferings of Eternity, by ſuffering himſelf in our ſtead, in the fulneſs of time.

That Jeſus Chriſt *is* in doing and ſuffering, our Supream and Matchleſs Example, and that he came to be ſo, is a truth, but that he is nothing further and came for no other end, is (you ſee) a high point of falſhood; for how ſhould Man be enabled to learn, and follow that example of obedience unleſs there were more in Chriſt, and what would become of that great

great reckoning of disobedience that Man stands guilty of. No, these are too narrow, he came to *bear our sins on his own Body on the tree*, and for this purpose had a Body fitted for him, and given him to bear this burden, to do this, as the will of his Father, to stand for us in stead of all Offerings, and Sacrifices; and *by that will*, saies the Apostle, *we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all*.

This was his business, not only to rectifie sinful Mankind by his example; but to redeem him by his Blood, *he was a teacher come from God*. As a Prophet he teaches us the way of Life, and as the best and greatest of Prophets is perfectly like his Doctrine, and his actions (that in all Teachers is the livelyest part of Doctrine) his carriage in Life and death, is our great Pattern and instruction; But what is said of his forerunner, is more eminently true of Christ, he is a Prophet and more then a Prophet, a Priest satisfying justice for us, and a King conquering sin and death for us, an Example in deed, but more than an Example, our *Sacrifice*, and our Life, and all in all, 'tis our Duty to walk as he walked, to make him the pattern of our steps 1 *Joh.* 2, 6. But our comfort and salvation lyeth in this, that he is the propitiation for our sins, *Verse* 2. So in the first *Chapter* of that *Epistle Verse* 7. *We are to walk in the Light, as he is in the Light*: For all our walking we have need of that which follows, that bears the great weight, the *Blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth us from all sin*, and so still that glory which he possesseth in his own Person, is the pledge of ours, he is there for *Us*, *he lives to make inter-*

cession for us, sayes the Apostle, and *I go to prepare a place for you*, sayes he himself.

We have in the words these two great points, and in the same order as the words ly. 1. The nature, and quality of the sufferings of Jesus Christ, And 2. The end of them.

In the expression of his suffering, we are to consider. 1. The commutation of the Persons, *he himself, for us.* 2. The work undertaken and performed, *he bare our sins in his own body on the tree.*

1. The Act, or sentence of the Law against the breach of it standing in force, and Divine justice expecting satisfaction, death was the necessary and inseperable consequent of sin. If you say the Supream Majesty of God being accountable to none, might have forgiven all without satisfaction. We are not to contest that, nor foolishly to offer to sound the bottomless deep of his absolute prerogative, Christ implies in his Prayer, that it was impossible that he could escape that cup: But the impossibility is resolv'd into his Fathers will, as the cause of it. But this we may clearly see following the tract of the holy Scriptures (our only safe way) that this way wherein our salvation is contriv'd is most excellent, and suitable to the greatness, and goodness of God, so full of wonders of wisdom, and love, that the Angels, as our Apostle tells us before, cannot forbear looking on it, and admiring it; for all their exact knowledge, yet they still find it infinitly beyond their knowledge, still in astonishment and admiration of what they see, and still in search

looking

looking in to see more. Those Cherubims still having their eyes fixed on this Mercy Seat.

Justice might indeed have siez'd on rebellious Man, and laid the pronounc'd punishment on him, mercy might have freely acquit him, and pardon'd all: But can we name any place where mercy and justice as relating to condemned Man could have met and shined joyntly in full aspect, save only in Jesus Christ, in whom indeed *Mercy and truth met, and righteousness and peace kissed each other.* Yea, in whose Person the Parties concern'd, that were at so great a distance met so near, as nearer, can not be imagin'd.

And not only was this the only way, for the consistence of these two, Justice and Mercy, but take each of them severally, and they could not have been in so full lustre, as in this. Gods just hatred of sin did out of doubt appear more in punishing his own only begotten Son for it, than if the whole race of Mankind had suffer'd for it Eternally. Again it raises the notion of Mercy to the highest, that sin is not only forgiven us, but for this end God's own coeternal Son, is given to us, and for us. Consider what he is, and what we are, he the *Son of his love*, and we Enemies. Therefore it is emphatically expres'd in the words, *he himself bare our sins. God so loved the World*, but love amounts to this much, that it was so great, as *to give his Son*: But how great that is, cannot be utter'd. In this sayes the Apostle, *God commendeth his love to us*, sets it up to the highest, gives us the richest and strongest evidence of it.

The foundation of this frame, this appearing of Christ for us, and undergoing and Answering all in our stead, lyes in the Decree of God, where it was plotted, and contriv'd in the whole way of it from Eternity, and the Father and the Son being one, and their thoughts and will one, they were perfectly agreed on't, and those likewise for whom it should hold, were agreed upon, and their Names written up, according to which they are said to be *given unto Christ to redeem.* And just according to that Model did all the work proceed, and was accomplished in all points, perfectly answering to the pattern of it in the Mind of God. As it was preconcluded there, that the Son should undertake the business, this matchless piece of Service, for his Father, and that by his interposing Men should be reconciled and saved, so that he might be altogether a fit Person for the Work, it was resolv'd, that as he was already fit for it by the Almightiness of his Deity, and Godhead, and the acceptableness of his Person to the Father, as the Son of God, so he should be further fitted by uniting wonderfully, weakness to Almightiness, the frailty of Man to the Power of God, because that suffering for Man was a main point of the work, so as his being the Son of God made him acceptable to God, his being the son of Man made him suitable to Man, in whose business he had engaged himself, and to the business it self to be perform'd; and not only was there in him, by his humane nature a conformity with Man (for that might have been by a new created Body) but a consanguinity with Man, by a Body framed of the same piece, a Redeemer, a Kinsman as the *Hebrew* word is, only purified

rified for his use, as was needful, and fram'd after a peculiar manner in the womb of a Virgin, as 'tis *Heb* 10. *Thou hast fitted a body for me*, having no sin it self, because ordained to have so much of our sins as 'tis here, *he bare them on his own body.*

And this looks back to the Primitive transaction and purpose, *Lo I come to do thy will*, sayes the Son, and *behold my servant whom I have chosen*, sayes the Father, this Master-piece of my works, none in Heaven or Earth fit to serve me in it, but mine own Son, and as he came into the World according to that decree, and will; so he goes out of it again, in that way, the Son of Man goeth as is determined, it was wickedly and malitiously done by Men against him, but determined (which is that he there speaks of) wisely and graciously by his Father, with his own consent: As in those two faced pictures, Look upon the Crucifying of Christ one way, as complotted by a treacherous Disciple, and Malicious Priests, and Rulers, and nothing more deform'd and hateful than the Authors of it; but view it again, as determin'd in Gods Counsel, for the restoring of lost Mankind, and so 'tis full of unspeakable beauty and sweetness, infinite wisdom and Love, in every tract of it.

Thus to the persons for whom, as their coming unto him reflects upon that first donation, as flowing from that, *all that the Father hath given me shall come unto me.* *John* 6.

Now this being Gods great design, that he would have Men eye and consider more than all the rest of his works, (and yet is least of all considered by the most) the other Covenant made with the first *Adam*

was

was but to make way, and ſo to ſpeak, to make work for this; for he knew that it would not hold, therefore as this New Covenant became needful by the breach of the other, ſo the failing of that other ſets off and commends the firmneſs of this, the former was with a Man in his beſt condition, and yet he kept it not, even then he prov'd vanity, as 'tis *Pſal.* 39. So that the ſecond to be ſtronger, is made with a Man indeed, to ſupply the former; but he is *God-man* to be ſurer than the former, and therefore it holds; and this is the difference as the Apoſtle expreſſes it, that the firſt *Adam*, in that firſt Covenant, was laid as a foundation, and though we ſay not that the Church in its true notion was built on him, yet the eſtate of the whole race of Mankind, the Materials that the Church is built of, lay on him for that time, and it failed: But upon this Rock the ſecond *Adam*, is the Church ſo firmly built, that *the gates of Hell cannot prevail againſt her.* The firſt *Adam* was made a *quickening*, or life-giving Spirit. The firſt had light but he transfer'd it not, yea, he kept it not, for himſelf drew in, and transfer'd Death, but the ſecond by Death, conveys life to all that are reckon'd his ſeed. *he bare their ſins.*

He bare them *on the tree* in that outſide of his ſuffering, the viſible kind of death inflicted on him that it was hanging on the tree of the Croſs; there was an Analogy with the end, and main work, and was order'd by the Lord with regard unto that, being a Death declar'd *accurſed by the Law*, as the Apoſtle St. *Paul* obſerves, and ſo declaring him that was God bleſſed for ever to have been made a curſe, that is accounted as accurſed for us, that we might

be

be bleſſed in him, *in whom* according to the Promiſe, *all the Nations of the Earth are bleſſed.*

But that wherein lay the ſtrength, and main ſtreſs of his ſufferings, was this inviſible weight that none could ſee that gaz'd on him; but he felt more then all. In this there are three things. 1. The weight of ſin. 2. The transferring of it upon Chriſt. 3. His bearing of it.

1. He bare as a heavy burden; ſo the word of bearing in general, and thoſe two words particularly us'd by the Prophet whither theſe allude, are the bearing of ſome great maſs or load, and thus ſin is, for it hath the wrath of an offended God hanging at it, indiſſolubly tyed to it, which who can bear the leaſt of it, and therefore the leaſt ſin, being the procuring cauſe of it, will preſs a man down for ever, that he ſhall not be able to riſe. *who can ſtand before thee when once thou art angry*, ſayes the *Pſalmiſt*, and the Prophet *Jer.* 3. *Return backſliding Iſrael and I will not cauſe my wrath to fall upon thee. fall* as a great weight, or as a Milſtone, cruſhes the ſoul.

But ſenſleſs we, go light under the burden of ſin, and feel it not, complain not of it, therefore truly ſaid to be *dead in it*, otherwayes it could not but preſs us, and preſs out complaints. *O wretched man that I am who ſhall deliver me?* A Prophane ſecure ſinner thinks it nothing to break the holy Law of God, to pleaſe his fleſh, or the World, counts ſin a light matter, makes a mock of it as *Salomon* ſayes, but a ſtirring Conſcience is of another mind, *Mine iniquities is gone over my head*, &c. *Pſal.* 38. 4.

Sin

Sin is such a burden as makes the very frame of Heaven and Earth that is not guilty of it, yea, the whole Creation to crack and groan ('tis the Apostles Doctrine *Rom.* 8.) and yet the impenitent heart whose guiltiness it is, not moved, groaneth not; for your accustomed groaning is no such matter.

Yea, to consider in the present subject where we may best read what it is, it was a heavy load to Jesus Christ, *Ps.* 40. Where the *Psalmist* speaks in the Person of Christ he complains heavily, *innumerable evils have compassed me about, Mine iniquities*, not his, as done by him, but yet his, by reckoning to pay for them, *they have taken hold of me, so that I am not able to look up, they are more then the hairs of my head, therefore my heart faileth me.* And sure that which pres'd him so sore, that upholds Heaven and Earth, no other in Heaven or in Earth could have sustained and surmounted, but would have sunk and and perish'd under it. Was it (think you) the pain of that common outside of his Death, though very painful, that drew such a word from him *My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?* Or was it the fear of it before hand that pres'd a sweat of Blood from him? No, it was this burden of sin, the first of which was committed in the Garden, that then began to be laid upon him and fasten'd on his shoulders in the Garden, ten thousand times heavier than the Cross, which he was caus'd to bear, that might be a while turn'd over to another; but this could not. This was the cup he so trembled at, that Gall and Vinegar after to be offer'd him by his Crucifiers, or any other part of his External sufferings. 'Twas the bitter Cup of wrath due to sin that his Father put

put into his hand, and caus'd him drink, the very same thing that is here called the *bearing our sins on his body*.

And consider, thatthe very smallest sins, went in to make up this load, and made it so much the heavier, and therefore though sins be comparatively lesser, and greater, yet learn thence to account no sin in it self small, that offends the great God, and lay heavy upon your great Redeemer in the day of his Sufferings.

At his apprehending, besides the Souldiers, that invisible crowd of the sins he was to suffer for came about him, for it was they that laid strongest hold on him, he could easily have shak'd off all the rest, as appears: But our sins laid the arrest on him, being accounted his, as 'tis in that forcited place *Psa.* 40. Now amongst these, were even those sins we call small, they were of the number that took him, and they were amongst those instruments of his bloodshed: If the greater were as the spear that pierc'd his side, the less were as the nails that pierc'd his Hands and his Feet, and the very least, as the Thornes that were set on his precious Head. And the multitude of them made up what was wanting in their magnitude, though they were small they were many.

2. They were transfer'd upon him by vertue of that Covenant we spoke of, They became his debt, and he responsible for all they came to. Seeing you have accepted of this business according to my will (may we conceive the Father saying to his Son) you must go through with it, you are engaged in it; but it is no other, than what you understood per-

fully before you knew what it would cost you, and yet out of your love with me to those I nam'd to be saved by you, you were as willing as I to the whole undertaking, now therefore the time is come, that I must lay upon you the sins of all those persons, and you must bear them, the sins of all those Believers that lived before, and all that are to come after to the end of the world. *The Lord laid on him the iniquity of us all*, says the Prophet, took it off from us, and charged it on him, made it to meet on him, or to fall in together as the word is, the sins of all, in all ages before, and after, that were to be saved, all their guiltiness encountered and met together on his back, upon the Crosse, and whosoever of all that Number had least sin, yet had no small Burden to cast on him; and to give accession to the whole Weight. *Every man hath had his own way of wandering*, as the Prophet there expresseth it, and he pay'd for all; all fell on him: And as in Testimony of his meekness and patience, so in this regard likewise, was he so silent in his Sufferings; inregard that though his Enemies dealt most unjustly with him; yet, he stood as convicted before the Justice Seat of his Father, under the imputed guilt of all our sins, and so eyeing him, and accounting his business chiefly with him, he did patiently bear the due punishment of all our sins at his Fathers hand, and stood that of the Psalmist, *I was as dumb and opened not my mouth, because thou didst it.* Therefore the Prophet immediately subjoynes, that of his silent carriage, *Isa.* 53. To that which he had forfeit off, the confluence of our iniquities upon him.

And if this our Sins were accounted his, then in the same way, and for that very reason of necessity, his sufferings, and satisfaction must be accounted ours, as he said for his disciples to the Men that came to take him, *if it be me ye seek, then let these go free*: So he said for all Believers to his father, his wrath then siezing on him, if on me you will lay hold, then let these go free. And thus the agreement was, 2. *Cor.* 5. *ult.*

So then, there is an union betwixt Believers and Jesus Christ, by which this interchange is made, he charg'd with their sins, and they cloath'd with his satisfaction, and righteousness, and that union is first in Gods decree of election running this way, that they should live in Christ, and so chuse the head, and the whole mystical body as one, and reckoning their debt as his in his purpose, that he might receive satisfaction, and they salvation in their head Christ; The execution of that purpose and union begun in Christ's incarnation, being for them, though the nature be more common, he is said *not to take on the Angels, but the seed of Abraham*, the company of Believers, he became Man for their sakes, because they are Men: that he is of the same nature with unbelieving Men that perish, is but by accident, as it were, there is no good to them in that, but the great evil of deeper condemnation if they hear of him, and believe not, but he was made Man to be like, yea, to be one with the Elect, *and he is not ashamed to call them Brethren*, as the Apostle there sayes, 2. Then in the actual intention of the Son so made Man, he presenting himself to the Father in all he did, and suffer'd as for them, having them,

 and

and them only in his eye and thoughts in all: *For their sakes do I sanctify my selfe, Jo.* 17. 1. 9. 3. The union is applyed and perform'd in them, when they are converted and ingrafted into Jesus Christ by faith and this doth actually discharge them of their own sins, and Entitle them to his Righteousness, and so justifies them in the sight of God. 4. The consummation of this union is in glory, which is the result and fruit of all the former, as it began in Heaven 'tis compleated there; but betwixt these Two in Heaven, the intervention of those other two degrees of it on earth were necessary, being intended in the first, as tending to the attainment of the last, these steps we have distinctly in his own prayer *Joh.* 17. First *Ver.* 2. Gods purpose that the Son should give eternal life to those he hath given him. 2. *Ver.* 4. I have finish'd the work. 3. *Ver.* 6, 8. And often after, their faith, their believing and keeping the word, and then the last *Ver.* 24. *I will that they whom thou hast given me be with me where I am.* There meets the first donation and the last.

Now to obtain this life for them he dyed in their stead, appeared as the high Priest, being perfectly, and truely what the name was on their plate of gold *holiness to the Lord. Exod.* 28 36. And so bearing their iniquity, as it is added there, of the Priest *Ver.* 38. But because he was not the Redeemer, but a perfect figure of him, he did not himself suffer for the peoples sin, but turn'd it over upon the beasts, that he sacrific'd, signifying that translation of sin, by laying his hand upon the head of the Beast: But Jesus Christ, is both the great High Priest, and the great Sacrifice in one, and this seem's to be here imploy'd

imply'd in these words, *himself* &c. *On his own body he bare* &c. Which the Legal Priests did not, so *Heb.* 9. 12. *He made his soul an offering for sin Isa.* 53. and *Heb.* 9. He offered up himself, his whole self, and in the History of the Gospel, his soul was heavy, and chiefly suffered; but the bearing on his body, and offering it that is oftenest mention'd as the visible part of the Sacrifice, and in his way of offering it, not excluding the other. Thus *Rom.* 12. 1. We are exhorted to give our bodies in opposition to the bodies of beasts, and called a living Sacrifice, which they are not without the Soul, so his bearing on his body imports the bearing it on his Soul too.

2. His *bearing* that hintes that he was active, and willing in his suffering for us; not a constrain'd Offering: He layed down his Life, as he tells us, and this here, *He bare*, is, he took willingly off, lifted from us that burden to bear it himself. It was counted an ill sign amongst the Heathens, when the Beasts went unwillingly to be Sacrific'd, and drew back; and good, when they went willingly: But never Sacrifice so willing, as our great Sacrifice was, and we may be assured, he hath appeased his Fathers wrath, and wrought Atonement for Us. *Isaac* in this, his Type, we heare of no Reluctance, but quietly bound, when he was to be Offered up. There be two words in *Esay*, the one bearing, the other taking away, this is also that *taking away the Sins of the World* in St. *John*, 1. 29. Which Answers to both, and so he, to both the Goats, *Levit.* 16. He did bear our Sins on his Crosse, and from thence to his Grave, and there they are Buried; and they whose Sins he did so bear, and take away, and Bury, they shall hear no more of them as theirs to bear, he

be not then worthy to behold, in that notion that *John* took him and design'd him by: *Behold the Lamb of God, that beareth and taketh away the sins of the World.*

You then that are Gazing on vanity, be perswaded to turne your Eyes this way, and behold this lasting wonder, this Lord of Life dying; but the most alas! Want a due Eye for this Object; 'tis the eye of Faith alone, that looks aright on him, and is daily discovering new worlds of excellency and delight in this crucified Saviour, that can view him daily, as hanging on the Crosse without the Childish gaudy help of a Crucifix, and grow in the knowledge of that Love, that passeth knowledge; and rejoyce it self in frequent thinking and speaking of him, in stead of these idle and vain troughts at the best, and empty discourses, wherein the most delight, and wear out the day. What is all knowledge but painted folly in comparison of this? though thou hadst *Solomon's* faculty to discourse of all plants, and have not the right knowledge of this root of *Jesse*: If thou were singular in the knowledge of the Stars, and course of the Heavens, and could'st walk through the Spheres with a *Jacob's staff*; but ignorant of this Star of *Jacob*? If thou knewest the Historyes of all Time, and the Life and Death, of all the famousest Princes, and could'st rehearse them all; but dost not Spiritually know and apply to thy self the death of *Jesus*, as thy Life, thou art but a wretched Fool for them, and all thy knowledge with thee shall quickly perish. On the other side, if thy capacity or breeding hath denyed thee the knowledge of all these things, wherein Men glory so much; Yet do but learn Christ

Crucified,

Crucified, and what wouldst thou have more? This shall make thee happy for ever, for *this is life eternal to know thee*, &c.

Here St. *Paul* sets up his rest, *I determined to know nothing but Jesus Christ and him Crucified.* Whatsoever I knew besides, I resolv'd to be as if I knew nothing besides this, the only knowledge wherein I will rejoyce my self, and which I will labour to impart to others.

I have try'd and compar'd the rest, and find them all unworthy of their Room beside this, and my whole Soul too little for this, and have past this Judgement and sentence on all. I have adjudg'd my self to deny all other knowledge, and confin'd my self within this Circle, and I am not streightned, for there's room enough in't, 'tis larger than Heaven and Earth, and *him crucified*, the most despis'd and ignominious part, yet the sweetest and most comfortable part of all, the Root, whence all our hopes of life and Spiritual joyes do spring.

But the most part hear this Subject as a Story, some a little mov'd with the present sound of it, but draw it not home into their hearts, to make it theirs, and find salvation in it, but still cleave to sin, and love sin better than him that suffered for it.

But you, whose hearts the Lord hath deeply humbled in the sense of sin, come to this depth of consolation, and try it, that you may have experience of the sweetness and riches of it. Study this point throughly, and you will find it answer all, and quiet your consciences. Apply this bearing of sin by the Lord Jesus for you, for it is publish'd and made known to you for this purpose, this is the

genuine

genuine and true uſe of it, as of the Brazen Serpent, not emptily to gaze on the Fabrick of it; but to cure thoſe that look'd on it: when all that can be ſaid, is ſaid againſt you, its true may you ſay, but it is ſatisfied for, he on whom I reſt made it his, and did bear it for me. The perſon of Chriſt of more worth than all Men, yea than all the creatures, and therefore his life a full ranſome for the greateſt offender.

And for outward troubles, and ſufferings which were the occaſion of this Doctrine in this place, they are all made exceeding light by the removal of this great preſſure. Let the Lord lay on me what he will, ſeeing he hath taken off my ſin, and laid that on his own Son in my ſtead, I may ſuffer many things, but he hath born that for me, which alone was able to make me miſerable.

And you that have this perſwaſion, how will your hearts be taken up with his love? *Who thus lov'd you, as to give himſelf for you*, and by interpoſing himſelf to bear off from you the ſtroke of everlaſting death, and that encountered all the wrath due to us, and went through with that great work by reaſon of his unſpeakable love, *Let him never go forth from my heart who for my ſake refus'd to go down from the croſs. That we being dead to ſin, ſhould live unto Righteouſneſſe.*

The Lord doth nothing in vain hath not made the leaſt of his work to no purpoſe, *in wiſdom hath he made them all*, ſayes the *Pſalmiſt*, and that is not only in regard of their excellent frame and Order, but of their end, which is a chief Point of Wiſdom;

ſo

ſo then to the right knowledge of this great work put into the hands of Jeſus Chriſt, it is of ſpecial concern to underſtand, what is this end.

This is the thing that his wiſdom and love aim'd at in that great undertaking, and therefore will be our trueſt wiſdom, and the trueſt evidence of our reflex Love to intend the ſame thing, that in this *the ſame mind may be in us that was in Chriſt Jeſus* in his ſuffering for us, and for this very end is it expreſs'd.

In this there are 3. Things. 1ſt. What this death and life is. 2. The intendment of it in the ſufferings and death of Jeſus Chriſt. 3. The effecting of it by them.

Whatſoever this is, ſure 'tis no ſmall change, that bears the Name of the great and laſt natural change that we are ſubject to, a *death*, and then another kind of life ſucceeding to it, and in this the greateſt part are miſtaken, that they take any light alteration in themſelves for true converſion.

There be a World deluded with ſuperficial Moral changes in their Life, ſome rectifying of their outward actions, and courſe of Life, and ſomewhat too in the temper and habitude of their mind, far from reaching the bottom of Natures wickedneſs, and laying the axe to the root of the Tree, 'tis ſuch a work as Men can make a ſhift withal by themſelves, but the Renovation that the Spirit of God worketh is like himſelf, ſo deep, and through a work, that it is juſtly called by the Name of the moſt ſubſtantial works, and productions *a new birth*, and more than that, *a new creation*, and here a *Death* and a kind of life following it.

This death to sin, supposes a former living in it, and to it, and while a Man is so, he is said indeed, *to be dead in sin*, and yet withal this is true, that he lives in sin, as the Apostle joynes the expressions, speaking of Widowes, *she that liveth in pleasures, is dead while she liveth*, 1 Tim. 5. *dead in trespasses and sins*, and he addes, *wherein ye walked*, which imports alike, such an one as it is, and more expresly *Verse* 3. *we had our conversation in the lusts of our flesh.* Now thus to live in sin, is call'd to be dead in it, because in that condition Man is indeed dead in respect of that Divine Life of the Soul, that happy being which it should have in Union with God, for which it was made, and without which it had better not be at all. For that Life as it is different from its natural being, and a kind of Life above it, so it is contrary to that corrupt being, and life it hath in sin, and therefore, to live in sin, is to be dead in it, being a deprivement of that Divine being, that Life of the Soul in God, in comparison whereof, not only the base life it hath in sin, but the very natural life it hath in the Body, and the Body by it, is not worthy the Name of Life. You see the Body when the thread of its union with the Soul is cut, becomes not only straightway a monster, a lump, but within a little time a putrified noysome Carcase, and thus the Soul by sin, is cut off from God, who is its life, as is the Soul of the Body, it hath not only no moving faculty in good, but fills full of rottenes and vilenes as the words, *Psal.* 14. *they are gone aside and become filthy.* The Soul by turning away from God turns filthy, yet as a Man thus Spiritually dead lives naturally, so

because

becaufe he acts and ſpends that Natural life in the wayes of ſin, he is ſaid to live in ſin; yea, there is ſomewhat more in that expreſſion, than the mere paſſing of his life in that way, for inſtead of that happy life his Soul ſhould have in God, he pleaſes himſelf in the miſerable life of ſin, that which is his death, as if it were the proper life, of his Soul that natural propenſion he hath to ſin, and the continual delight he takes in it, as in his Element, and living to it, as if that were the very end of his being. In that eſtate his Body nor his mind ſtirreth not without ſin, ſetting aſide his manifeſt breaches of the Law, thoſe actions that are evidently and totally ſinful, his natural actions, his eating, and drinking; his religious actions, his Praying, and hearing, and Preaching are ſin at the bottom and generally his heart is no other, but a forge of ſin, *every imagination*, every fiction of thing framed there, *is only evil continually*, or every day, and all the day long, 'tis his very trade and Life.

Now in oppoſition to this life of Sin, living in it, and to it, a Chriſtian is ſaid to dy to ſin, to be cut off or ſeparated from it. In our miſerable natural eſtate there is as cloſe an union betwixt us, and ſin, as betwixt our Souls and Bodies, it lives in us, and we in it, and the longer we live in that condition the more the union growes, and the harder it is to diſſolve it, and it is as old as the union of Soul and Body begun with it; ſo that nothing but that death here ſpoke of can part them: And this death, in this relative ſenſe is mutual, in the work of converſion ſin dyes, and the ſoul dyes to ſin, and there two are really one and the ſame, the ſpirit of God

kills both at one blow, Sin in the Soul, and the soul to sin, as the Apostle sayes of the World, both are kill'd the one to the other.

And there are in it chiefly these two things that make the difference. 1. The Solidness. And 2. The universallity of this change under this notion of Death.

Many things may ly in a Man's way betwixt him and the acting of divers sins, which possibly he affects most, some restraints outward, or inward may be upon him, the authority of others, or the fear of shame, or punishment, or the check of an enlightned conscience, and though by reason of these, he commit not the sin he would, yet he lives in it, because he loves it, because he would commit it, as we say, the soul lives not so much where it animats, as where it Loves. And generally that kind of Metaphorical life, by which a Man is said to live in any thing, hath its principal Seat in the affection that's the immediate link of the union in such a life, and the untying and death consists chiefly in the disengagement of the heart, breaking off the affection from it. *Ye that love the Lord hate evil.* An unrenewed mind may have some temporary dislikes even of its beloved sins in cold blood, but it returnes to like them within a while. A Man may not only have times of cessation from his wonted way of sinning, but by reason of the Society wherein he is, and withdrawing of occasions to sin, and divers other causes, his very desire after it may seem to him to be abated, and yet he not dead to sin, but only asleep to it, and therefore when a temptation back'd with opportunity, and other inducing circumstances comes

and

and joggs him, he awakes, and ariſes and followes it.

A Man may for a while diſtaſte ſome meat that he loves (poſſibly upon a ſurfet) but he regains quickly his likeing of it: Every quarrel with ſin, and fit of diſlike of it, is not this hatred. Upon the lively repreſenting the deformity of his ſin to his mind, Certainly a Natural Man may fall out with it, but theſe are but as the litle jarres of Husband and Wife, that are far from diſſolving the Marriage, 'tis not a fixed hatred, ſuch as amongſt the Jews inferr'd a divorce, if *thou hate her put her away*, and that is to die to it, as by a Legal Divorce the Husband and Wife are civilly dead one to another in regard of the ty and uſe of Marriage.

Again, ſome Mens Education and Cuſtome, and morall principles may free them from the groſſeſt kind of Sins, yea, a Man's temper may be averſe from them, but they are alive to their own kind of ſins; ſuch as poſſibly are not ſo deform'd in the common account, Coveteouſneſs, or Pride, or hardneſs of heart, and either a hatred or diſdain of the wayes of Holineſs that are too ſtrict for them, and exceed their ſize. Beſide for the good of humane Society, and for the Intereſt of his own Church, and People, God reſtrains many Natural Men from the height of wickedneſs, and gives them moral Vertues. There be very many, and very common ſins that more refined Natures, it may be, are ſcarce tempted to, but as in their Diet and Apparel, and other things in their Natural Life, they have the ſame kind of being with other Perſons, though more neat and pleaſant, ſo in this living to ſin: They live the ſame life

with

with other ungodly Men, thoughin a little more delicate way.

They consider not, that the Devils are not in themselves subject to, nor capable of many of those sins, that are accounted grossest amongst Men, and yet are greater Rebels and Enemies to God than Men are.

But to be dead to sin goes deeper, and extends further than all these, Namely, a most inward alienation of heart from sin, and most universal from all sin, an antipathy to the most beloved sin. Not only he must forbear sin, but hate it, *I hate vain thoughts*, and not only hate some, but all, *I hate every false way*. A stroke at the heart does it, which is the certainest and quickest Death of any wound. For in this dying to sin, all the whole Man of necessity dyes to it, the mind dyes to the Device, and study of Sin, that vein and invention becomes dead; the hand dies to the acting of it; the ear to the delightful hearing of things profane, and sinful; the Tongue to the Worlds dialect of Oaths, and rotten-speaking, and calumny and evil speaking, this is the commonest piece of the Tongues life in sin, the very natural heat of sin that acts and vents most that way; the Eye dead to that intemperate look that *Solomon* speaks of, *eyeing the Wine when it is red, and well colour'd in the cup. Prov.* 23. That is, is taken with looking on the glittering skin of that Serpent, till it bite, and sting, as there he adds. Dead to that unchaste look that sets fire in the heart, to which *Job* blind folded and deaded his eyes, by an express compact, and agreement with them, *I have made a Covenant with mine eyes.*

The

The Eye of a Godly Man is not on the false sparkling of the Worlds Pomp and Honour and Wealth, 'tis dead to them, quite dazled with a greater beauty, the grass looks fine in the morning, when 'tis set with those liquid Pearles, the drops of dew that shine upon it, but if you can look but a little while on the body of the Sun, and then look down again, the Eye is as it were dead, sees not that faint shining on the earth that it thought so gay before, and as the Eye is blinded, and dies to it, so within a few hours it quite evanishes and dyes it self.

Men think it strange that the Godly are not of their Dyet, that their Appetite is not stirr'd with the delights of dainties, they know not that such as be Christians indeed, are dead to those things, and the best dishes that are set before a dead Man, give him not a stomach. The Godly Mans *throat is cut to those meats*, as *Solomon* advises in another subject. But why may not you be a little more sociable to follow the fashion of the World, and and take a share with your Neighbours, may some say, without so precise and narrow examining every thing? 'Tis true, sayes the Christian, that the time when I delighted as little with Conscience as others, but sought my sake, and pleased my self, as they do, and look't no further, but that was when *I was alive to those things*, but now truly *I am dead to them*, and can you look for activity and conversation from a dead Man? the pleasures of sin wherein I liv'd is still the same, but I am not the same. Are you such a Shake, and a Fool to feed the Natural Man as to hear affronts, and swallow them, and say nothing? Can you suffer to be abus'd so by such, and such a wrong?

Indeed

Indeed ſayes the Chriſtian again, I could once have reſented an injury as you, or another, and had ſomewhat of that you call high-heartedneſs, when I was alive after your faſhion, but now that humour is not only ſomething cool'd, but 'tis kill'd in me, 'tis cold dead as ye ſay, and a greater Spirit (I think) than my own, hath taught me another Leſſon, hath made me both deaf, and dumb that way, and hath given me a new vent, and another language, and another Party to ſpeak to in ſuch occaſions, ſee for this, *Pſal.* 38. 12, 13, 14, 15. *They that ſeek my hurt, ſpeak miſchievous things, and imagine deceits all the day long.* What doth he in this caſe? *But I as a deaf man heard not, and I was as a dumb man that openeth not his mouth,* And why? *for in thee O Lord do I hope.* And for this deadneſs that you deſpiſe, I have ſeen him that dyed for me, *who when he was reviled, reviled not again.*

This is the true Character of a Chriſtian dead to ſin, but alas! Where is this Chriſtian to be found, and yet thus is every one, that truly partakes of Chriſt; he is dead to ſin really, Hypocrites have a Hiſtorical kind of Death, like this, as Players in Tragedies. Thoſe Players have looſe bags of Blood, that receive the wound, ſo the Hypocrite in ſome externals, and it may be, in that which is as near him as any outward thing, his Purſe, he may ſuffer ſome Bloodſhed of that for Chriſt, but this death to ſin is not a ſounding fit that one may recover out of again, the Apoſtle *Rom.* 6. addes, *that he is buried.*

But this is an unpleaſant Subject, to talk thus of Death and Burial, the very Name of Death, in the ſofteſt ſenſe it can have, makes a ſowr melancholly

diſcourſe.

discourse. It is so indeed, if you take it alone, if there were not for the life that's lost, a far better immediately following, but so 'tis here, *Living unto righteousness* succeeds *dying to sin*.

That which makes natural death so affrightful, the *King of terrours*, as *Job* calls it, is mainly this faint belief, and assurance of the Resurrection, and glory to come. And without this, all mens moral resolves and discourses are too weak Cordialls against this fear, they may set a good face on't, and speak big, and so cover the fear they cannot cure, but certainly they are a little ridiculous, that would perswade Men to be content to dy, by reasoning from the necessity and unavoydableness of it, which taken alone rather may beget a desperate discontent, than a quiet compliance, the very weakness of that Argument is, that it is too strong, *Durum telum*. That of Company is phantastick, it may please the imagination but satisfies not the judgement. Nor are the miseries of life, though somewhat Properer a full perswasive for Death, the oldest decrepitest, most diseased persons, yet naturally fall not out with life, but could have a mind to it still, and the very truth is this, the worst cottage any dwells in they are loath to go out, till they know of a better. And the reason why that which is so hideous to others was so sweet to Martyrs, *Heb.* 11. 35. And other godly Men, that have heartily embrac'd death, and welcom'd it though in very Terrible shapes, was, because they had firm assurance of Immortality beyond it, the ugly Deaths head when the light of glory shines through the holes of it, is comely, and lovely. To look upon death as Eternities birth day, is that which makes it, not only tol-

erable but admirable. *Hic dies perfruendus æterni natalis est.* Is the word I admire most of any Heathen?

Thus here, the strongest inducement to this Death, is the true notice and contemplation of this Life, unto which it sets us over, 'tis most necessary to represent this, for a natural Man hath as great an aversion every what from this figurative Death, this dying to sin, as from natural Death, and there is the more necessity of perswading him to this, because his consent is necessary to't, no Man dies this Death to sin unwillingly, although no Man is naturally willing to it, much of this death consists in a Man's consenting thus to dye: And this is not only a lawful, but a laudible, yea a necessary self murder, *Mortify therefore your members which are upon the Earth.* Sayes the Apostle *Col.* 3. 5. Now no sinner will be content to dy to sin, if that were all, but if it be passing to a more excellent Life, then he gaineth, and it were a folly not to seek this Death. It was a strange power of *Plato's* discourse of the Souls Immortality that moved a young Man upon reading it, to throw himself into the Sea, that he might leap through it, to that Immortality: But truely, were this Life of God, this Life to righteousness, and the excellency and delight of it known, it would gain many minds to this death that steps into't.

1. There is a necessity of a new being to be the principle of new acting, and motion; as the Apostle sayes *while ye served sin ye were free from righteousness*, so to us, *while ye were alive to sin ye were dead to righteousness*; But there is a new breath of life from Heaven, breathed on the Soul: Then lives the

Soul

Soul indeed, when it is one with God, and ſees *Light in his Light*, hath a Spiritual knowledge of him, and therefore Soveraignely loves him, and delights in his will, and that is indeed, *to live unto righeouſneſs*, which in a comprehenſive ſenſe takes in all the frame of a Chriſtian life, and all the duties of it, towards God and towards Men.

By this new Nature the very Natural motion of the ſoul ſo taken, is obedience to God, and walking in the paths of righteouſneſs, it can no more live in the habitude, and wayes of ſin, than a Man can live under water. Sin is not the Chriſtians Element, 'tis too groſs for his renew'd Soul, as the water is for his body: He may fall into't, but he cannot breath in it, cannot take delight, and continue to live in it, but his delight is *in the Law of the Lord*, that's the walk that his Soul refreſhes it ſelf in, he loves it entirely, and loves it moſt, where it moſt croſſes the remainders of corruption that are in him, he bends the ſtrength of his Soul to pleaſe God, aimes all at that, it takes up his thoughts early, and late, hath no other purpoſe in his being, and living: but only to honour his Lord, that's to live to righteouſneſs, he doth not make a by-work of it, a ſtudy for his ſpare houres, no, 'tis his main buſineſs, his all. *In this law doth he meditate day and night.* This life, as the other, is in the heart, and from thence diffuſes to the whole Man; he loves righteouſneſs, and *receiveth the truth* (as the Apoſtle ſpeaks) *in the love of it.* A natural Man may do many things that for their ſhell, and outſide are righteous: but he lives not to righteouſneſs, becauſe his heart is not poſſeſs'd and rul'd with the love of it, but this life makes the

godly Man delight to walk uprightly and to ſpeak of righteouſneſs, his Language and wayes carry the reſemblance of his heart *Pſa.* 37. *Ver.* 30, 31. I know 'tis eaſieſt to act that part of Religion that is in the Tongue; but the Chriſtian ought not for that, to be Spiritually dumb: Becauſe ſome Birds are taught to ſpeak, Men do not for that give it over, and leave off to ſpeak, the *mouth of the righteous ſpeaketh wiſdom, and his Tongue talketh of judgement*, and his feet ſtrive to keep pace with his Tongue, which gives evidence of its unfainedneſs. *None of his ſteps ſhall ſlide*, or he ſhall not ſtagger in his ſteps, but that which is betwixt theſe, is the common Spring *the Law of God is in his heart*, of both, and from thence, as *Salomon* ſayes *are the iſſues of his life*, that Law in his heart, is the principle of this living to righteouſneſs.

2 The Second thing here is the deſign or Intendment of this death, and life, in the ſufferings and death of Chriſt, *he bare ſin*, and died for it, that we might dye to it.

Out of ſome conviction of the conſequence of Sin, many have a confus'd deſire to be juſtified, to have ſin pardon'd, and look no further, think not on the importance and neceſſity of ſanctification, the nature whereof is expreſs'd by this *dying to ſin* and *living to righteouſneſs*.

But here we ſee, that ſanctification is neceſſary as inſeparably connexed with juſtification, not only, as its companion, but as its end, which in ſome kind raiſes it above the other, that it was the thing which God ey'd, and intended in taking away the guiltineſs of ſin, that we might be renew'd, and ſanctified:

If

If we compare them in point of time, either backward, holineſs was alwayes neceſſary unto happineſs: But ſatisfying for ſin and the pardon of it, was made neceſſary by ſin, or if we look forward, the eſtate we are appointed to, and for which we are delivered from wrath, is an eſtate of perfect holineſs. When we reflect upon that great work of Redemption, we ſee it aim'd at there *Redeem'd to be holy Eph.* 5. 25, 26. *Tit.* 2. 14. And go yet higher to the very Spring, the decree of Election. And then its ſaid *Choſen before, that we ſhould be Holy*, and in end it ſhall Suit the deſigne, *Nothing ſhall enter into the new Jeruſalem, that is defiled*, or unholy: Nothing but all purity there, not a ſpot of ſinfull pollution, not a wrinkle of the Old Man, for this end was that great work undertaken by the Son of God, that he might frame, out of polluted Mankind a new holy generation to his Father, that might compaſſe his throne in the Life of glory, and give him pure praiſes, and behold his face in that eternity. Now for this end, it was needfull according to the all-wiſe purpoſe of the Father that the guiltineſs of ſin, and ſentence of Death ſhould be once removed, and thus the burden of that lay upon Chriſts ſhoulders on the Croſſe, and that done, it is further neceſſary, that Souls ſo deliver'd, be likewiſe purg'd, and renew'd, for they are deſign'd to perfection of holineſs in end, and it muſt begin here.

Yet is it not poſſible to perſwade Men of this, that Chriſt had this in his eye, and purpoſe, when he was lift up upon the croſſe and look'd upon the whole company of thoſe his Father had given him

to

to ſave, that he would redeem them to be a number of holy Perſons. We would be redeem'd (who is there would not) but he would have his redeemed ones holy, and they that are not true to this his end, but croſſe and oppoſe him in it, may hear of redemption long, and often, But litle to their comfort. Are you reſolv'd ſtill to abuſe and delude your ſelves? Well, whither you will believe it or no, this is once more told you, there is unſpeakable comfort in the death of Chriſt, but it belongs only to thoſe that *are dead to ſin, and alive to righteouſneſs*. This Circle ſhuts out the impenitent world, there it cloſes and cannot be broke through, but all that are penitent are by their effectual calling lifted in to it, tranſlated from that accurs'd condition wherein they were: So then if you will live in your ſins, you may, but then reſolve withal to bear them your ſelves, for Chriſt in his bearing of ſin, meant of none but ſuch as in due time are thus dead, and thus alive with him.

3. But then in the Third place, Chriſts Sufferings and death effects all this. 1. As the exemplary cauſe, the lively contemplation of Chriſt crucified, is the moſt powerful of all thoughts to ſeparate the heart and ſin. But 2. beſides this working as a Moral cauſe, as that example; Chriſt is the effective natural cauſe of this death, and life: For he is one with the Believer, and there is a real influence of his death, and life into their Souls. This Myſterious Union of Chriſt, and the believer is that whereon both their Juſtification and Sanctification and the whole frame of their Salvation and Happineſs depends; and in this particular the Apoſtle ſtill

inſiſts

insists on it, speaking of Christ and Believers as one in his Death and Resurrection, *crucified with him, dead with him, buried with him, and risen with him. Rom. 6.*

Being arisen, he applies his death to those he dyed for, and by it kills the life of sin in them, and so is aveng'd on it, for its being the cause of his death according to that of the *Psalm, raise mens that I may requite them* He infuses, and then actuates and stirres up that faith and love in them, by which they are united to him and those work powerfully in this.

3. Faith look's so stedfastly on its suffering Saviour, that as they say *intellectus fit illud quod intelligit*, it makes the Soul like him, assimilates and conformes it to his Death as the Apostle speaks. That which some fable of some of their Saints of receiving the impression of the wounds of Christ in their body, is true in a Spiritual sense of the Soul of every one that is indeed a Saint, and a believer, it takes the very print of his Death, by beholding him, and *dyes to sin*, and then takes that of his rising again, and *lives to righteousness*, as it applies it to justify, so to Mortify, drawes vertue from it. Thus sayd one, Christ aim'd at this in all those Sufferings that with so much love he went through, and shall I disappoint him, and not serve his end?

4. That other powerfull grace of Love is joynt in this work with faith, for Love desires nothing more than likeness, and conformity, though it be a painfull resemblance, so much the better, and fitter to testify love, therefore will have the Soul dye with him that dy'd for it, and the very same kind of death, I *am crucified with Christ*, sayes the great Apostle.

Apostle. The Love of Christ in the Soul takes the very Nails that fastned him to the Crosse, and crucifies the Soul to the World, and to Sin, Love is strong as Death, particularly in this, the strongest and livelieſt Body, when Death seizes it, must yield, and so becomes motionless that was so vigorous before; And the Soul that is most active, and unwearied in Sin, when this Love seizes it, it is kill'd to Sin, and as Death seperates a Man from his dearest Friends, and Society, this Love breaks all the tyes and friendship with Sin. Generally, as *Plato* hath it, Love takes away ones living in them selves, and transters into the party loved, but the divine Love of Christ doth it in the truest and highest manner.

By whose stripes ye were healed] The misery of fallen Man, and the mercy of his deliverance, are both of them such a deep, as no one expression, yea, no variety added one to another can reach their bottom. Here we have divers very significative ones, 1. The guiltiness of sin as an intollerable burden pressing the Soul and sinking it, and that transfer'd and layed on a stronger Back. *He bare*: Then 2. The same wretchedness under the same notion of a strange disease by all other means incurable, *healed by his stripes*: And (3.) again represented by the forlorn condition of a Sheep wandring, and our Salvation to be found only in the love and wisdom of our great Shepherd. And all these are borrow'd from that sweet and clear prophecy *Isa.* 53.

The pollured nature of Man is no other but a bundle of desperate diseases, he is spiritually dead, as the Scriptures often teach. Now this contradicts not,

name

nor at all Leſſen's the matter: But only, becauſe this miſery juſtly called death, is in a Subject animated with a natural life, therefore ſo it may bear the Name and ſenſe of ſickneſs, or wound, and therefore 'tis groſs miſpriſion, they are as much out in their Argument, as in their concluſion, that would extract out of theſe expreſſions any evidence of remains of Spiritual life or good, in our corrupted Nature: But they are not worthy the conteſt, tho vain heads think to argue themſelves into life, and are ſeeking that life by Logick in Miſerable Nature, that they ſhould ſeek by faith in Jeſus Chriſt, Namely, in theſe *his ſtripes* by which we are healed.

It were a large task to name our Spiritual Maladies, how much more, ſeverally to unfold their Natures, ſuch a multitude of corrupt falſe Principles in the mind, that as Gangrens do ſpread themſelves through the Soul, and defile the whole Man, and total groſs blindneſs and unbelief in Spiritual things, and that ſtone of the heart, hardneſs and impenitency, Lethargies of ſenſleſneſs and ſecurity, and then (for there be ſuch complications of Spiritual diſeaſes in us, as in Naturals are altogether impoſſible) ſuch burning fevers of inordinate affections, deſires of luſt, and Malice, and envy, ſuch racking, and tormenting cares of Covetouſneſs, and *feeding on Earth and Aſhes*, as the Prophet ſpeaks in another caſe, according to the deprav'd appetite, that accompanies ſome Diſeaſes: Such tumours of Pride, and ſelf-conceit that break forth, as filthy botches in Mens words, and carriage one with another. And in a word, what a wonderful diſorder muſt needs be in the Natural Soul by the frequent interchanges,

and fight of contrary passions within it, and to these from without, how many deadly wounds we receive from the tentations of Satan and the World? We receive them, and by the weapons they furnish us, we willingly wound our selves, as the Apostle says of them, who *will be rich, they fall into divers snares, and noysome lusts, and pierce themselves through with many sorrowes.*

Did we see it, no Infirmery nor Hospital ever so full of loathsome and miserable Spectacles as Spiritually our wretched Nature is in any one of us apart: How much more when multitudes of us are met together? But our evils are hid from us, and we perish miserably in a Dream of happiness. That makes up and compleats our wretchedness, that we feel it not, with our other diseases. And this makes it worse still. This was the Churches disease. *Rev.* 3. *Thou sayest I am rich, and knowest not that thou art Poor.* &c. We are usually full of complaints of trifling griefs that are of small moment, and think not on, not feel not our Dangerous Maladies, as he who shewed a Physician his fore finger, but the Physician told him, he had more need to think on the cure of a dangerous Impostume within him, which he perceiv'd by looking to him, though himself did not feel it.

In dangerous Maladies, or wounds, there be these evils, a tendency to death, and with that the apprehension of the terrour, and fear of it, and the present distemper of the Body by them, and this is in so. 1. There is the guiltiness of sin binding over the Soul to death, the most frightful eternal Death. 2. The terrour

terrour of conſcience in the apprehenſion of that death, or wrath that is the conſequent and end of ſin. 3. The raging and prevailing power of ſin, which is the ill habitude and diſtemper of the ſoul: But theſe ſtripes, and that blood that iſſued from them are a ſound cure, applied unto the ſoul, they take away the guiltineſs of ſin, and death deſerved, and free us from our engagement to thoſe everlaſting ſcourgings, and laſhes of the wrath of God, and likewiſe they are the only cure of thoſe preſent terrours, and pangs of Conſcience ariſing from the ſenſe of that wrath, and ſentence of death upon the Soul. Our Iniquities that met on his back, laid open to the rod, which in it ſelf was free, thoſe hands that never wrought iniquity, and thoſe feet that never declined from the way of righteouſneſs, yet for our workes and wandrings were pierced, and that Tongue dropping with Vinegar and Gall on the Croſs, that never ſpoke a guileful nor ſinful word. The Blood of thoſe ſtripes are that Balm iſſuing from that tree of Life ſo pierced, that can only give eaſe to the Conſcience, and heal the wounds of it, and they deliver from the power of ſin working by their influence, and loathing of ſin, that was the cauſe of them; they cleanſe out the vitious humours of our corrupt nature, by opening up that iſſue of Repentance *they ſhall look on him, and mourn over him whom they have pierced.*

Now to the end it may thus cure, it muſt be applyed, 'tis the only receit, but it muſt be received, if for healing. The moſt Soveraign Medicines cure not in another manner, and therefore ſtill their firſt let cur is ℞, *recipe*, take ſuch a thing.

This is amongſt thoſe wonders of that great work, that the Soveraign Lord of all, that binds and looſes at his pleaſure the influences of Heaven, and the Power and workings of all the Creatures, would himſelf in our fleſh be thus bound, the only Son bound as a Slave, and ſcourged as a Maleſactor, and his willing obedience, made this an acceptable and expiateing Sacrifice, amongſt the reſt of his ſufferings, *he gave his back to the ſmiters.*

Now it cannot be, that any that is thus healed, reflecting upon this cure, can again take any conſtant delight in ſin, 'tis impoſſible ſo far to forget both the grief it bred themſelves, and their Lord; as to make a new agreement with it, to live in the pleaſure of it.

His ſtripes] Turn your thoughts all to conſider this, you that are not healed, that you may be healed, and you that are, apply it ſtill to perfect the cure in that part wherein it is gradual, and not complete, and for the eaſe you have found to bleſs and love him who endur'd ſo much uneaſe to that end. There is a ſweet mixture of ſorrow, and joy in contemplating theſe ſtripes, ſorrow ſure by ſympathy, that they were his ſtripes, and joy that they were our healing. Chriſtians are too litle mindful and ſenſible of this, and it may be ſomewhat guilty of that *Hoſ.* 11. 3. *They knew not that I healed them.*

Verſe. 25.

For ye were as Sheep going aſtray, but are now returned to the Shepherd and Biſhop of your Souls.

IN theſe few words we have a brief, and yet clear repreſentation of the wretchedneſs of our Natural condition, and our happineſs in Chriſt. The reſemblance is borrow'd from the ſame place in the Prophet *Iſai.* 53. 6.

Not to preſs the compariſon, and as it is uſual in a poſtilling way, to ſtrain it beyond the purpoſe, in our loſt eſtate. This is all or the main wherein the reſemblance with Sheep holds, our *wandring*, as forlorn, and expoſed to deſtruction, as a Sheep that is ſtrayed and wandred from the fold. So it imports indeed the loſs of a better condition, the ſafety and happineſs of the Soul, that good which is proper to it, as the ſutable good of the bruite creature here nam'd is ſafe and good Paſture.

That we may know there is none exempt in Nature from the guiltineſs, and miſery of this wandring, the Prophet is expreſs in the univerſallity of it. *All we have gone aſtray.* And the Apoſtle here is particular to his Brethren, ſo as it falls not amiſs to any other. *Ye were as Sheep going aſtray.* Yea, the Prophet

Prophet there to the collective universal addes a distributive, *every Man to his own way*. Or a Man to his way. They agree in this, that they all wander, though they differ in their several wayes. There is an imbred Propension to stray in them all, more than Sheep that are Creatures naturally wandring, but each one hath his own way of it.

And this is our folly that we flatter our selves by comparison, and every one is pleased with himself, because he is free from some wandrings of others, not considering that he is a wanderer too, though in another way, he hath his way as those he look's on have theirs. And as Men agree in wandring, though different in their way; so those wayes agree in this, that they lead unto misery, and shall end in that. Think you there is no way to Hell but the way of open Profaness? Yes sure, many a way that seems smooth, and clean in a Mans own eyes, and yet will end in Condemnation. Truth is but one, Errour endless and interminable; as of Natural Life and Death, so of Spiritual, the way to Life is one: But many out of it, *Lethi mille aditus*. Each one hath not opportunity nor ability for every sin, or every degree, but each after his own Mode and Power, *Isa.* 40. 20.

Thy Tongue it may be wanders not in the common Path road of Oathes and Curses, yet it wanders in secret Calumnies, in Detraction and Defaming of others, though so conveyed as it scarce appears: Or if thou speak them not, yet thou art pleas'd to hear them: It wanders in trifling away the precious hours of irrecoverable time, with vain unprofitable bablings; in thy Converse, or if thou art much alone,

or

or in Company much silent, yet, is not thy foolish mind still hunting Vanity? Following this selfe-pleasing design, or t'other, and seldom and very slightly, if at all, conversant with God, and the things of Heaven. Which although they alone have the truest, and the highest Pleasure in them, yet to thy Carnal Mind are tasteless and unsavory. There is scarce any thing so light and Childish that thou wilt not more willingly and liberally bestow thy retired thoughts on, than upon those excellent incomparable delights. Oh! the foolish heart of Man, when it may seem deep, and serious, how often is it at *Domitian's* Exercise in his Study, catching Flies.

Men account litle of the wandring of their hearts, and yet truly, that is most of all to be consider'd: For *from thence are the Issues of life*. 'Tis the heart that hath forgotten God, and is roving after Vanity this causes all the Errours of Mens Words, and Actions, a wandring Heart, makes wandring Eyes and Feet, and Tongue. 'Tis the leading Wanderer that misleads all the rest, and as we are here call'd *straying Sheep*, so within the heart in it self of each of us, there is as it were a whole wandring Flock, such a Multitude of Fictions *Gen.* 8. Ungodly devices, the Word that signifies a thought in *Hebrew*, is from that which is feeding of a Flock, and it likewise signifies wandring, and so these meet in our thoughts, they are a great Flock, and a wandring Flock. This is the Natural freedom of our thoughts, they are free to wander from God, and Heaven, and carry us to perdition: And we are guilty of many Pollutions this way, that we never acted. Men are less sensible of heart wickedness, if it break not forth

forth: But it is far more active in ſin than any of the ſenſes, or the whole body. The motion of Spirits is far ſwifter than of bodies, it can go more way in any of theſe wandrings in one hour, than the body is able to follow in many dayes.

When the Body is tyed to attendance in the exerciſes where we are, yet know you not 'tis ſo much the more, if you do not know and feel it, and bewail it, know you that the heart can take its liberty and leave you nothing but a Carcaſe. This the unrenewed heart doth continually: *They come and ſit before me*, &c. *But their heart is after their Covetouſneſs*, it hath another way to go, another God to wait on.

But are now returned, &c.] Whatſoever are the ſeveral wayes of our ſtraying, all our wandring is the averſion of the heart from God, whence of neceſſity followes a continual unſetledneſs and diſquiet, the Mind as a wave of the Sea toſſed too and fro with the Wind, it tumbles from one ſin and vanity to another, and finds no reſt, as a ſick Perſon toſſes from one ſide to another, and from one part of their Bed to another, andchange their Bed it may be, in hope of eaſe, and ſtill 'tis farther off, thus is the Soul in all its wandrings: But ſhift and change as it will no reſt until it come to this *returning*. Jer. 2. 36. *Why gaddeſt thou about ſo much to change thy way? Thou ſhalt be aſhamed of* Egypt *as thou waſt of* Aſſyria, Nothing but ſorrow and ſhame till you change all thoſe wayes, for this one. *Return O Iſrael ſayes the Lord, if thou wilt return, return unto me.* 'Tis not changing one of your own wayes for another

another will profit you: But in returning to me is your ſalvation.

Seeing we find in our own experience, beſides the wofull end of our wandrings, the preſent perplexity and diſquiet of them. Why are we not perſwaded to this? To give up with them all. *Return unto thy reſt O my Soul* ſayes *David*, this were our wiſdom.

But is not that God in whom we expect reſt, incens'd againſt us for our wandering, and is he not being offended a conſuming fire? True, but this is the way to find acceptance, and peace, and ſatisfying comforts in returning. Come firſt to this Shepherd of Souls Jeſus Chriſt, and by him come unto the Father, *No Man comes unto the Father* ſayes he, *but by me*, this is *via Regia*, the high and right way of returning unto God *Jo.* 10, 11. *I am the good Shepherd, and Ver.* 9. *I am the door, by me if any Man enter in, he ſhall be ſaved*: But if he miſſe this door, he ſhall miſs ſalvation too. *Ye are returned* ſayes the Apoſtle. *Unto the Shepherd, And Biſhop of your Souls.*

There be Three things neceſſary to reſtore us to our happineſs, whence we have departed in our wandrings. 1. To take away the guiltineſs of thoſe former wandrings. 2. To reduce us into the way again. 3. To keep and lead us in it.

Now all theſe are alone performable by this great Shepherd 1. He did ſatisfy for the offence of our wanderings, and ſo remove our guiltineſs, he himſelf, the Shepherd became a Sacrifice for his flock, a Sheep or ſpotleſs Lamb as *Iſa.* 53. Reſembled

In the 6th. *Ver.* *We like ſheep have gone aſtray*, and immediately after our ſtraying mention'd. *The Lord laid, or Made meet on him, the iniquity of us all.* Of all our ſtrayings and *Ver.* 7. He that is our Shepherd, the ſame is the Lamb for Sacrifice, ſo our Apoſtle Chap. 1. *We are redeem'd not by Silver and Gold, &c. But by the precious blood of Chriſt: As of a Lamb without blemiſh, and without ſpot ſo Jo.* 10. *He the good Shepherd that layes down his life for his Sheep.* Men think not on this, many of them that have ſome thoughts of returning and amendment, think not that there is a ſatisfaction due for by-paſs'd wanderings, and therefore they paſſe by Chriſt, and conſider not the neceſſity of returning to him, and by him to the Father.

2. He brings them back into the way of life, *Ye are returned*, but think not this is by their own knowledge, and skill that they diſcover their errour, and find out the right path, and by their own ſtrength return into it, No; if we would conteſt Grammaticiſms, the word here is paſſive, *ye are returned*, reduc'd, or cauſed to return: But this truth hangs not on ſo weak notions, as are often us'd, either for, or againſt it. In that Prophecy *Ezek.* 34. 16. *I will ſeek, and bring again* &c. and *Pſa.* 23. *Ver.* 3. *He reſtoreth, or returneth My ſoul.* And that this is the work of this Shepherd the Lord Jeſus God-man, is clear and frequent in the Goſpel. He came for this very end, 'twas his errand and buſineſs in the world, *to ſeek and to ſave that which was loſt.* And in that parable, he goes after that which is loſt untill he find it, and then having found it doth not only ſhow it the way, and ſay to it re-

turn,

turn, and leaves it to come after, but *he layes it on his ſhoulder*, and brings it home, and notwithſtanding all his pains in ſtead of complaining againſt it for wandering, he rejoyces in that he hath found and recovered it, *he layes it on his ſhoulder rejoycing*, and in this there is as much of the reſemblance as in any other thing. Loſt Man can no more return unſought, than a Sheep that wandereth, which is obſerv'd of all Creatures to have leaſt of that skill. Men may have ſome confus'd thoughts of returning: But to know the way, and to come home, unleſs they be ſought out, they cannot, this is *David's* ſuite, though acquainted with the fold. *Lord ſeek thy Servant.* This did our great and good Shepherd through thoſe difficult wayes he was to paſſe, for our finding, wherein he not only hazarded, but realy laid down his life, and thoſe ſhoulders that did bear the iniquity of our wandring by expiation, upon the ſame doth he bear, and bring us back from it, by effectual converſion.

3. He keeps and leads us on in that way, into which he hath reduc'd us, he Leaves us not again to try our own skill, if we can walk to Heaven alone, being ſet into the path of it: But he ſtill conducts us in it by his own hand, and that's the cauſe of our perſiſtance in it, and attaining the bleſſed end of it. *He returneth* my Soul ſayes the *Pſalmiſt*, and that's not all, he addes *he leadeth me in the paths of righteouſneſs for his names ſake*, by thoſe paths are the *green paſtures* meant, and the *ſtill waters* that he ſpeaks of, And thus we may be reſolv'd, if we are of his flock, are we led in the paths of righteouſneſs? Do we delight our ſelves in him, and his

ways? Are they the proper refreſhment of our Souls? Do we find his word ſweet unto our Taſte? Are we taken with the green paſtures in it, and the Criſtall Streams of Conſolations that glide through it. Can we diſcern his voyce, and does it draw our hearts, ſo that we follow it? *Joh.* 10. *&c.*

The Shepherd, and Biſhop] It was the ſtile of Kings to be called Shepherds, and it is the dignity of the Miniſters of the Goſpel to have both theſe names; But this great Shepherd, and Biſhop, is peculiarly worthy of theſe Names, as ſupeme he alone Univerſall Shepherd and Biſhop and none but an Antichriſt, that makes himſelf as Chriſt, that kills and deſtroys the flock, will aſſume this Title that belongs only to the Lord, the great owner of his Flock, he himſelf is their great Shepherd and Biſhop, All Shepherds and Biſhops that are truely ſuch have their function and place from him, hold of him, and follow his Rules, and example in their inſpection of the flock; it were the happineſs of Kingdomes if Magiſtrates and Kings would ſet him, his love, and meekneſs, and equity before their eyes in their government. And all thoſe that are properly his Biſhops, are eſpecially oblig'd to ſtudy this pattern, to warm their affections to the flock, and tender care of their ſalvation by looking on this Arch-biſhop and Archſhepherd, as our Apoſtle calls him, and in their meaſure, to follow his foot-ſteps, ſpending their life, and ſtrength in ſeeking the good of his ſheep, conſidering that they are ſubordinately Shepherds of Souls, that is in Spiritual things ſo communicable.

The Lord Jeſus is ſupremely and ſingularly ſuch, they under him Shepherds of Souls; Becauſe their diligence

diligence concernes the Soul, which excludes not the body in Spiritual respects, as it is capable of things Spiritual, and Eternal, by its Union with the Soul; But Christ is Soveraign Shepherd of Souls above all, and singular, in that he not only teaches them the Doctrine of Salvation, but purchas'd Salvation for them, and reaches the Soul powerfully, which Ministers by their own power cannot do, he layes hold on it, and reduces, and leads it, and causes it to walk in his wayes. In this sense it agrees to him alone as Supreme in the incommunicable sense.

And from his Conduct, and Power, and Love, flowes all the comfort of his flock, considering their own folly, and weakness. This alone gives them confidence, that his hand guides them, and they believe his strength far surpassing that of the roaring Lyon, *Job.* 10, 28, 29, 30. His wisdom in knowing their particular estate, and their weakness, and his tender love pitying them, and applying himself to it. Other Shepherds, even faithfull ones, may mistake them, and not know the way of leading them in some particulars, and may be sometimes wanting in that tender affection that they ow, and if they have that, yet are not able to bear them up, and support them powerfully: But this Shepherd, is perfect in all these. *Isa.* 40. 11. The young and weak Christian, or the Elder at weak times, when they are big and heavy with some inward exercise of mind, which shall bring forth advantage and peace afterwards to them: Them he leads gently, and uses them with Tenderness that their weakness requires.

And

And generally he provides for his Flock, and heals them when they are any way hurt, and washes and makes them fruitful; So that they are as that Flock used in the comparison *Cant.* 4. 2. *They are comely, but their shepherd much more. Formosi pecoris Custos formosior.* They are given him in the Fathers purpose and choice, and so they that return, even while they wander, are Sheep in some other sense than the rest that perish. They are in the secret love of election of Christs Sheep fold, tho' not actually, yet brought into it, but when his time comes whersoever they wander, and how farr off soever, even those that have strayed most, yet he reduces them, and rejoyces Heaven with their return, and leads them till he bring them to partake of the joy that is there. That's the end of their way wherein he guides them. *Joh.* 10. 27, 28. *They hear my voice and follow me*, and it shall not repent them to do so; to follow him is to follow life, *he is the life*, And he is in that Glory which we desire. And where would we be, if not there where he is. Who at his parting from the world said, *where I am there they shall be also*, To this happy Meeting and Heavenly abode God of his Infinite mercy bring us Through *Jesus Christ our Lord.* Amen.

FINIS

Errata.

Page 3 line ult Apostl read Apostle *p.* 10 *l.* 6. vaing'o'y r. vain glory *p.* 16 *l.* 12 oded r. obedience *p.* 19 *l.* 8 eternal r. external *p.* 20 *l.* 17 commaud r. command *p.* 34 *l.* 23 blessiings r. blessings *l.* 24 valluable r. valuable *p.* 35 *l.* 25 ou r. out *p.* 38 *l.* 4. natucal r. natural *p.* 39 *l.* ablit r. ability *p.* 41 *l.* last Thefore r. Therefore *p.* 42 *l.* 29 they have r. they livy *p.* 43 *l.* 26 flugard r sluggard *p.* 44 *l.* 15 assurence r. assurance *l.* 23 woldley r. worldly. *p.* 114 *l.* 13 intelligeable r. intelligible *p.* 116 *l.* 7 wailng r. waiting *l.* 8 darkes r. darkness 121 *l.* 10 foretold r foretold *p.* 124 *l.* 4 underdand r. understand *p.* 132 *l.* 11 no stop after them *p.* 135 *l.* 4 wtih r. with *p.* 1 45 *l.* 2 porsperity r. prosperity *p.* 147 *l.* 11. Christa in r. Christian *p.* 149 *l.* 17 impossiable r. impossible *p.* 150 *l.* 16 doctine r. doctrine *p.* 152 *l.* 27. perfane r. profane *l.* antependt paculiar r. peculiar *p.* 174 *l.* 25 temperal r. temporal *p.* 185 *l.* 11. his r. all *p.* 181 *l.* 10 appearnce r. appearance *l.* last tiemes r. times *p.* 191 *l.* 24 aud r. and 192 *ult* made delend *p.* 194 antepenult cecevied r. received *p.* 195 *l.* 6 brethen r. brethren *p.* 198 *l.* 18 Evangelist r. Evangelists *p.* 209 *l.* 10 is r. it *p.* 239 *l.* last Covenants r. Covenant *p.* 246. *l.* 30 Ehp. r. Eph. *p.* 146 *l.* 14 way r. may *p.* 258 *l.* 1 this esteem precious r. this esteem. Precious *p.* 261 active r. active *p.* 264 *l.* 19 Priestood r. Priesthood accept. to God: as here fei r. text r. acc: to God, as h. f. i. t. text *p.* 276 *l.* 22 speak; of r. speak of; *p.* 280 *l.* 29 speaks, of hard &c. r. speaks of, hard &c. *p.* 282 *l.* 25 shalln ot r. shall not *l.* 31 caulling r. calling *p.* 303 *l.* last ceremoany r. ceremony *p.* 307 *l.* 14 poriton r. portion *p.* 315 *l.* 39 is r. it *p* 336 *l* 12 their r. there *p.* 372 *l.* 13 partacular r. particular *p.* 377 *l.* 23 hlng r. thing *p.* 432 *l.* ult wha the r. what he *p.* 481 *l.* 27 ei r. ur.